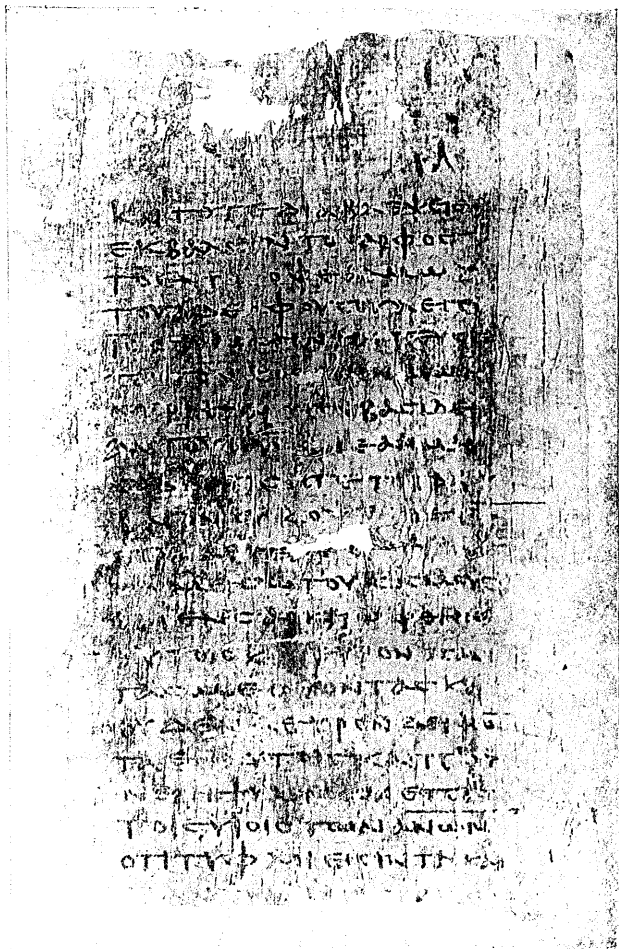


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TREASURES OF THE DUST



PAPYRUS OF "SAYINGS OF JESUS"

TREASURES OF THE DUST

THE NEW TESTAMENT IN THE LIGHT
OF RECENT EXCAVATIONS

BY

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AUTHOR'S PREFACE TO FIRST
DUTCH EDITION

IN this book, in addition to a considerable amount of new matter, I have made use of an enlarged form of a lecture delivered by me to various gatherings inside and outside the Student Movement. From the questions and discussions evoked by this lecture, it was repeatedly evident how very little informed the educated members of the Christian Churches are about the many and various recent discoveries in the field of New Testament study. They have often heard about all kinds of completely untenable, and even antiquated, semi-rationalist theories, but know either very little or nothing at all about the newly ascertained facts. Our Church members have a right to know the present position of things in regard to important points of biblical interpretation and history, and I have therefore tried to give in this little book some account of the most important results of present-day New Testament research.

In writing it, I have tried, as far as possible, to avoid technical terms, but although I may not have succeeded entirely, I still hope that my book may prove readable by those whose interest I have desired to arouse. Foot-notes are also reduced to a minimum. Should a "specialist"

read it, he will not need them, and they are anathema to the "layman." At the end of the book will be found a brief Bibliography, indicating the works to which a deeply interested reader may turn for further study of the various aspects of the subject.

M. VAN RHYN

DRIEBERGEN

15th November 1925

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

ONE of the most hopeful aspects of present-day civilisation is the large degree of internationalism in the domain of learning. In the particular branch of literary and historical research with which this book deals, there has been a long history of mutual interplay between England and Germany, as well as contributions from many other countries. And now comes a Dutchman, gleaning in many fields, and the result which he here presents contains the essence of the work done in New Testament Research on the basis of archæological investigations in the last half-century in England, Germany, Holland, Italy, and elsewhere. Much of what is here given exists in English already, but scattered through many volumes large and small, and some of them difficult of access to the general reader. But much will be new to all those to whom the untranslated works of German and Dutch scholars are a locked treasury.

The author's pet aversion of foot-notes cannot be dispensed with as completely as in the original, but again an attempt has been made to keep them at a minimum.

The Bible references are not all quoted from the same version, because there is no English version completely comparable with the Dutch

translation used by Dr van Rhyn. Consequently I have quoted sometimes from Moffatt, sometimes from Weymouth, and occasionally fallen back, for the sake of euphony or old association, on the Authorised Version. In other cases there was nothing for it but to translate into English the Dutch version quoted by the author, or the point of the quotation would have been lost.

In the matter of quotations from modern authors, I trust that I have discovered all those passages in the English works on which Dr van Rhyn has partly based his book, which ought to have been quoted verbatim. But if not, I make my apologies in advance to any one of the authorities concerned. A full list of the titles and authors of these and other books will be found in the Bibliography, but it has been thought better to omit from this all but the translated works of the Dutch and German authorities. Although some of them are available in the British Museum and certain special libraries, those open to the ordinary English reader will not contain them.

WINIFREDE TATHAM THOMPSON

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CONTENTS

	PAGE
AUTHOR'S PREFACE	5
TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE	7
<i>CHAP.</i>	
I. INTRODUCTION—PALESTINE AND EGYPT— “OSTRACA” AND “PAPYRI”—RUBBISH- HEAPS AND GRAVES	II
II. LIFE IN THE SMALL TOWNS OF THE EMPIRE— THE SOCIAL POSITION OF THE EARLY CHRISTIANS—THE GREEK OF THE NEW TESTAMENT—ADOLF DEISSMANN	26
III. NEW SAYINGS OF JESUS—PRIVATE LETTERS— AGREEMENTS AND INVITATIONS	48
IV. THE WORSHIP OF CHRIST AND THE WORSHIP OF CÆSAR—LUKE II—THE NUMBER OF THE BEAST	74
V. FRESH LIGHT ON VARIOUS TEXTS—THE LITERARY QUALITY OF THE NEW TESTA- MENT WRITINGS—FORM AND CONTENT OF ANCIENT LETTERS AND BOOKS	94

CHAP.	PAGE
VI. DISCOVERIES IN ITALY, GREECE, AND ASIA	
MINOR—NEW MSS. OF THE NEW TESTAMENT	117
VII. EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITINGS—CONCLUSION	136
BIBLIOGRAPHY	151
INDEX OF BIBLE REFERENCES	155

TREASURES OF THE DUST

I

INTRODUCTION — PALESTINE AND EGYPT—
“OSTRACA” AND “PAPYRI”—RUBBISH-
HEAPS AND GRAVES

ALL those who have any acquaintance with modern studies in the history of civilisation are aware that, during the past seventy or eighty years, a number of important excavations have been made in the ancient sites round about the Mediterranean Sea. Especially in Palestine and Egypt, in Greece, Italy and elsewhere, and also in the countries that were formerly Assyria and Babylonia, all kinds of remarkable discoveries have been made. Not only ancient history in general, but the world into which we are transported when we take up our Bibles, has, through the excavations in Palestine and elsewhere, taken on an entirely fresh aspect. In the field of Old Testament studies, the excavations in Egypt, in the districts round the ancient Babel and Nineveh, on the island of Cyprus, in Phœnicia, in the “land of the Hittites,” and, last but not least, in Palestine itself, have completely altered our ideas as to a number of Old Testament problems. Much work has been and is still being done in this field by numerous organisations and individual

students. Reports are constantly appearing in periodicals and in the daily press of more or less important discoveries, which are continuing to throw new light on all kinds of questions. It is quite impossible to say what surprises may be in store for us in the future.

The results of the excavations have not only influenced our study of the Old Testament; the results of recent researches have completely superseded various methods of work in New Testament study, and given us an entirely new picture of its background. It is the intention of this book to give some account of the significance of all kinds of recent excavations in the study of the New Testament, and to show how much we have to thank these excavations for a better understanding of these writings. Attention will be paid principally to a discussion of the papyri, found for the most part in Egypt, but throughout, and particularly in the later chapters, certain excavations outside Egypt will also come under consideration.

Readers may be astonished to find that, where it is the New Testament that is being studied, so much stress should be laid on Egypt. It is, of course, a matter of common knowledge that the geographical background of the New Testament writings is, to a very considerable extent, the country of Palestine. Jesus was born in Bethlehem and grew up in Nazareth. After His public ministry began, He laboured principally in Galilee and Judea. There is no doubt that He visited Perea and the countries on the other side

of the Jordan, and also spent some time in Samaria and in the districts round about Tyre and Sidon. But, with the exception of a single mention in the Nativity stories, nothing is to be found of any connection with Egypt. A little later the first Christian community developed in Jerusalem, and from thence the movement spread to the districts of Judea and Samaria, to Damascus and Antioch, overseas and through the provinces of Asia Minor to Greece and Rome, perhaps to Spain and other lands ; but of Egypt little or nothing is to be heard. The emphasis falls principally on Palestine.

It may as well be stated plainly here that the excavations in Palestine have produced very few results tending towards a better understanding of the New Testament writings, but closer consideration makes this less incomprehensible than it appears at first sight. We must not forget that Palestine, like, for instance, Belgium or the valley of the Po, has been, in the course of the centuries, pretty much a battlefield of the nations. How many battles have been fought on its soil in all periods of history ! Again, when the pilgrimages to the Holy Land began, and thousands of pilgrims, particularly during the period of the Crusades, journeyed to Palestine, these palmers by no means left the ancient holy places undisturbed, but rather handled them in a manner not free of reproach. Then the fact that the Moslems made themselves masters of Palestine, and set up their own shrines in various places, makes it extremely difficult, if not impossible, to

undertake further investigations below ground. This is particularly true in the case of the site of the Temple, Mount Moriah, where first the Temple of Solomon and later that of Herod were the joy and pride of the pious Israelite. When the then Emperor William II. of Germany visited Jerusalem in 1898, and raised the question of further excavations, the Temple Sheik replied with a definite negative: "What God Himself has covered, shall man not lay open." A few years ago a band of Swedish irresponsibles managed to obtain permission from the official in charge of the mountain to enter the Mosque of Omar during the night, and to make a search there for the ancient Altar of Burnt Offerings of Solomon's Temple. The arrangement was discovered; the party received warning through a friend, and its members were just able to make their escape, but the affair cost the too complacent official his life. This shows clearly how difficult it is to achieve anything in the way of excavation in cities such as Jerusalem. If we realise, further, that elsewhere houses, or even towns or villages, have been erected on important sites, that continuous and frequent rains in Palestine have wrought much destruction, and that the building stone in use there is extremely brittle and unsuitable for the preservation of inscriptions, then we shall understand more readily why the excavations in Palestine have not added very greatly to our knowledge of the New Testament.

Among the few results of excavations in

Palestine of which mention may be made in connection with New Testament study is a stone which was discovered by Clermont-Ganneau in 1871. This stone originally stood in the Temple of Herod the Great, and it bears an inscription, threatening with death every heathen (or "Gentile") who should enter into the actual Holy Place. In all probability, this stone was already there in the days of Jesus, and was often noticed by Him, at such times as He visited the Holy Place. Among the finds which do most probably bring us into direct contact with the life of Jesus, we may include the spring near Nazareth, where Jesus as a child probably went many a time to fetch water for His parents, the well of Sychar, where He spoke to the woman of Samaria, and perhaps also the threshold of the Synagogue at Capernaum. Working in April and May 1905, at Tell Hum, a German expedition laid bare a Jewish synagogue, dating from Roman times. The building was 78 feet long and 59 feet wide, of a magnificent white limestone, and was finer than any other edifice of its kind discovered up to 1905. Since the excavations made by Macalister and others have shown that in no case can Khan Minyeh be the ancient Capernaum, seeing that no pottery was found there that dated back earlier than the Arabian period, Tell Hum may be taken to be the former Capernaum; it is therefore possible to conclude that here the very same synagogue has been excavated that is mentioned so many times in the Gospels. The door-sill that lies before the

ruin must many a time have been trodden upon by the feet of Jesus.

While the site of Herod's Temple can, in the nature of things, be ascertained, the position of the Holy Sepulchre is still not quite certain. Certain pools and ancient gateways which were known in Jerusalem in the days of Jesus can be identified, but in regard to the site of the palaces of Herod Antipas and of the High Priest Caiaphas, there is still no absolute certainty. The excavations made by Prof. Sellin, now of Berlin, at Jericho, between 1907 and 1909, have exposed the ancient walls of this remarkable city. Sellin's work showed that the city and its walls were much smaller than had been generally supposed. His researches produced very strong evidence that in Jericho houses had actually been built in the walls, as related in the story of Rahab and the spies. The period during which Jesus went to Jericho and paid His visit to the house of the director of the customs office, Zaccheus, has received very little new light from the excavations. They have, however, indicated that Jericho in the days of Jesus was also a commercial city of some importance.¹

It will be fairly clear from the foregoing that the excavations in Palestine have so far not produced very great results in connection with the New Testament records. One thing they have, however, certainly taught us, and that is the gap

¹ I was told by Prof. Böhl not long ago that tourists had carried away so many stones from the excavated walls of the ancient Jericho that hardly anything was left of them.

between rich and poor in the lifetime of Jesus. There can no longer be any doubt that Jesus lived in a period full of luxury, and that He must have been in daily contact with the signs of a widely ramified system of communications covering the whole of the known world. Jesus and His disciples had no more than bare necessities. But in their immediate neighbourhood were numbers of rich people. The coast of the Sea of Galilee was a very favourite summer holiday resort among the Roman notables. Tiberias, built during the early years of Jesus, and made by Herod the capital of Galilee, was a magnificent Greek city. Splendid ruins have been found in Samaria, as also at Gadara and Gerasa in Decapolis. At Gerasa were found two hundred and thirty great columns and Corinthian pillars, a triumphal arch, unusually beautiful temples and baths, a great theatre accommodating six thousand spectators, and even an artificially constructed deep-water dock. It is evident that the sayings of Jesus regarding riches and poverty bore a very close relation to the social conditions in His day, as we have learnt more of them from the excavations.

Let us now go back to our point of departure, and turn our attention to the excavations in Egypt, and in particular to the *papyri* discovered there.

In the world of the ancients it was not so easy to obtain sufficient and satisfactory writing materials as nowadays. In those times people had to make use of “ostraka” (fragments of

earthenware) and of the so-called "papyrus." Use was made first and foremost of the "ostraka" or potsherds. If anything were broken, the fragments were used for the writing of bills or short letters. It was not so very difficult to come by such fragments, for they could be picked up easily on rubbish-heaps or elsewhere. They were also fairly easy to write on, the antique pottery not being glazed like ours.

In addition to "ostraka," use was made of "papyrus," from which word, as is generally known, our word paper is derived. The papyrus plant, from which this writing material was made, grew by the River Nile. The white pith found in this plant was removed and cut into long strips. Several strips were laid side by side, and others placed crosswise over them. The two layers were then pressed together with water from the Nile, subsequently dried in the sun, stamped flat, and made smooth with some other substance. The papyrus sheets obtained in this manner were pasted end to end to form a roll. Such rolls could be made to almost any required length. There are still some in existence that are more than a hundred feet long.

The papyri found in Egypt have been discovered principally in two kinds of places: on rubbish-heaps and in tombs. We shall take the rubbish-heaps first.

In our present-day civilisation it is the practice, when used paper has to be cleared away, either to send it to the paper-mills or to burn it. The ancient Egyptians were not in the habit of

burning their waste paper, but threw it on heaps outside the cities or villages in which they lived. Naturally the existence of these rubbish-heaps was not altogether lost sight of in the course of ages ; but nobody supposed that treasures for antiquarian research were to be found there. It was not until within the last score of years or so that these rubbish-heaps have been opened and carefully investigated. Thanks to the favourable climatic conditions, their contents have, on the whole, remained in a good state of preservation. It seldom rains in Egypt, and the water supply of the country is largely dependent on the flooding of the Nile. The desert sand soon covered over all the quantities of papyrus sheets thrown away from time to time, and preserved them against decay. Exactly the same thing happened to the next layer of papyrus, so that these rubbish-heaps went on getting higher and higher, and obviously the undermost layers contained the most ancient papyri. It has even been stated that matter dating from the thirty-sixth century B.C. has been preserved.

When these rubbish-heaps were opened, all kinds of writings of the most varied nature were found. Let us suppose that in Edinburgh¹ papyrus was in use as writing material, that all the used material was thrown away outside the city on rubbish heaps, that it never rained, and that a desert surrounded the city ; if, then, 2000 years hence, the rubbish-heaps made in the twentieth century were to be opened, the

¹ The author's comparison is with Utrecht.

investigators would make discoveries illustrating in a wonderful manner the life of Edinburgh in our generation. They would find documents of all kinds relating to municipal government, information regarding Church affairs, the University, the banks, the postal system, the minutes of synod meetings, school children's reports, bills and receipts from shops, papers from lawyers' offices, private correspondence of every sort, etc.

The discoveries in the ancient Egyptian rubbish-heaps were of much the same character. All kinds of matter have been found, including many official documents, but also all kinds of papers relating to the private life of individuals.

Not only on rubbish-heaps, but also in very many tombs, remarkable papyri have been discovered. The tombs of ancient Egypt have always been places in which people in all later centuries have sought after antiquities, and particularly ancient writings. The ancient Egyptians believed very strongly in the continued existence of the soul after death. Perhaps, in the world of the ancients, no civilisation laid so much emphasis on the continued existence of the soul. A feature of the Egyptian belief in immortality was their idea that those who were buried must have their various needs provided for. It was most important that the dead person should have his favourite reading-matter with him, so that the books which he had loved most in his lifetime were placed with him in his

tomb. The excavations have, in many cases, restored these writings to the light of day, and many of these books now lie on the shelves of our great libraries.

In the tombs also, thanks to the dry climate and the sand, the papyri have, on the whole, remained in a good state of preservation. The well-known American investigator, Camden M. Cobern,¹ who has written an excellent book on the significance of the later discoveries in adding to our knowledge of the New Testament, relates that he has seen flowers taken from a tomb in which they had been laid three thousand years ago. According to Cobern's account, these flowers had kept their colour, and, in one case, they even seemed to have preserved something of their fragrance.

The discoveries in the ancient Egyptian tombs were not seldom rich in surprises. It was the practice to cover the upper portion of a mummy with a single piece for the head and another for the breast, both of which were moulded roughly according to the head and bust of the human body. In making these covers, layers of old papyri were often used as backing or filling, the whole being then covered over with painted plaster. Now in the excavations the plaster layer has been carefully removed, and the under layer of papyri extracted in such a manner that its contents could be accurately studied by the researchers.

About the year 1900 the famous archæologists,

¹ See Bibliography on page 155.

Grenfell and Hunt, made a discovery in the ancient Tebtunis, lying to the south of Fayum. Here they had been organising a search for papyri, but in the course of weeks of searching they had found nothing but crocodiles. The crocodile was, in ancient Egypt, a god. Now Dr Flinders Petrie, a no less famous archæologist, had some years previously found near Hawara a burial ground with sacred crocodiles. This discovery had caused much astonishment at the time, but it had not been regarded as having great significance, and, in any case, one such discovery, for anyone who was in search of papyri, was sufficient. Day after day the workmen under Grenfell and Hunt found more crocodiles. Finally the leaders gave orders to cease excavations. One of the workmen was, however, so annoyed at again finding in a tomb a small crocodile, instead of a princess decked with jewels, that he seized the crocodile and flung it down, so that it broke in pieces. To the astonishment of all, the beast was completely filled with papyri! It may be imagined how quickly the importance of the once despised crocodiles increased. Haste was made to collect the other bodies, which had already been thrown on a rubbish-heap, and it was found that a great proportion of these mummies contained remarkable rolls. The mouths of some were filled with papyri. Others were simply wrapped round in layers of papyrus. From the bodies of these crocodiles there came to light fragments of ancient authors, royal decrees, contracts, petitions,

private letters, and various other matter. The fragments dated principally from the third century B.C.

By far the greatest number of papyri have been found in the Fayum district. Fayum lay in the Libyan Desert, about forty miles S.S.W. of Cairo. The district extended over about thirty miles, and had, at various periods, an area of from 400 to 900 square miles. In all probability this district was originally a lake, in which only a single piece of tableland was inhabitable. About a thousand years before the Trojan Wars, certain Egyptian kings had dams constructed, so as to preserve the land from inundation when the Nile rose, and to keep the water, even at its highest, below the level of the towns on the tableland. By this means the Egyptian kings obtained a gradually increasing area of dry land, and on the reclaimed portion they built a famous summer residence, with glorious monuments, among which the most notable were the far-famed Labyrinth and the Pyramid of Hawara. The lake remained in about the same condition until the time of Herodotus (*c.* 450 B.C.), but during the two centuries which elapsed between the visit of Herodotus and the reign of Ptolemaus Philadelphus (*c.* 260 B.C.), the kings once more turned their attention to this area. New dykes and canals were constructed, and fresh villages came into being. Between the reign of Ptolemaus Philadelphus and third century or so A.D. the district of Fayum flourished exceedingly, but with the decline of Egypt the system of

dams and canals fell into decay. The desert sand drifted over the villages : some disappeared wholly, nothing but heaps of rubbish being left.

In or near the district of Fayum there were certain cities, of which may be mentioned Arsinoë and, more particularly, Oxyrhynchus, from both of which large numbers of papyri have been recovered. Oxyrhynchus was an important place, not only through its situation, barely ten miles from the Nile, and its consequently continuous relation with the commerce of the Nile, but chiefly because it was once a very well-known centre of Christianity. During the first centuries of the Christian era, in particular, Oxyrhynchus enjoyed a high degree of prosperity. This is very clearly shown by the great numbers of papyri, dating from various parts of this period, that have been found in this city. Of the 960 dated texts which are included in the eleven published volumes of the "Oxyrhynchus Papyri," more than 740 belong to the first three centuries A.D. About a hundred must certainly be ascribed to the fourth century, and of the dated texts from the fourth century, there are hardly twenty for the seventy-five years following on the Council of Nicea in 325 A.D. In the fifth century there was a revival of importance, when Oxyrhynchus and the surrounding desert became filled with monks, while its former prosperity seems to have been restored in the sixth century, and the town to have ranked once more among the most important in Egypt. The particular

reason why the Oxyrhynchus excavations are of so great importance is that almost all the newly discovered portions of the New Testament were found there. Several of these will be dealt with further on.

II

LIFE IN THE SMALL TOWNS OF THE EMPIRE—THE
SOCIAL POSITION OF THE EARLY CHRISTIANS
—THE GREEK OF THE NEW TESTAMENT—
ADOLF DEISSMANN

WHEREIN does the great importance of the recovered papyri really lie, in relation to the study of the New Testament?

Gaston Boissier, some years ago, in his *Promenades Archéologiques*—a book which, though now somewhat out of date, is still worth reading—points out the reasons why the excavations at Pompeii have become of such great importance to scholars in our time. Boissier includes among these reasons the fact that, before the Pompeian investigations, so little was known about life in the provinces in the days of Imperial Rome, though life in Rome itself could be studied from such works as those of Cicero and Horace. Now, however, since the discoveries at Pompeii and Herculaneum have been made, we know what kind of life was lived in the provinces of the Roman Empire.

Similarly, we owe to the excavations in Egypt a glimpse of life as it was lived in the Roman Empire in the small towns and villages in the heart of the country. This information is of

great importance to us, because, by the aid of the impressions of life in Egyptian towns and villages that are to be gained from the "ostraka" and "papyri," we may reconstruct to some extent a picture of the daily life of the people among whom Jesus and His disciples laboured. We now have some clearer idea as to how life was lived in Capernaum or Nazareth.

But this is not the only result that has accrued.

In the last ten years and more, much has been said and written on the question as to what the social conditions in the primitive Christian communities really were. In particular, the question has again and again been asked: "To what social class did the earliest Christians belong?"¹ Maurenbrecher has asserted in various of his writings that the earliest Christian converts must, without question, be considered as belonging to the "proletariat." This conclusion is not a particularly probable one. In regard to the Gentile Christian congregations, as we meet them in the Epistles, it is impossible to produce good grounds for the assertion that the whole mental outlook of their members was governed by hunger and economic necessity. The Epistles assume, throughout, a certain degree of mental training, such as is not easily met with, as a rule, in the typical working man. Further, the leaders of the primitive Christian movement by no means give the impression that they were

¹ Cf. the writings of A. Deissmann, particularly his *Paul*, translated into English by W. E. Wilson. Von Harnack and Troeltsch and other German and Dutch authors have written on this subject, as has Dr van Rhyn in his book, *Een blik in het onderwijs van Jesus*.

proclaiming a kind of "class struggle." The first Christian leaders were evangelists: they were concerned with the Kingdom of God and the souls of men, and not with a reversal of economic conditions. A class-conscious proletarian movement Primitive Christianity certainly was not.

But even less possible would it be to affirm that the early Christians belonged to what might be called the rich. There certainly were rich people among their number. Anyone who had a sufficiently large room in his house for congregational meetings to be held in it certainly must be regarded as being well off. We hear, for instance, of "the church that is in the house" of Aquila at Ephesus (1 Cor. xvi. 19; Rom. xvi. 5), of Nymphas at Laodicea (Col. iv. 15), of Philemon at Colossus (Philem. 2). At Corinth Gaius is called by Paul "the host of the whole church" (Rom. xvi. 23, Weymouth translation), and the "city treasurer," Erastus, was among the members of the congregation. It is also remarkable that certain women who play their part in the earliest history of missionary enterprise seem to have been well-to-do, as, for instance, Chloe, probably at Corinth (1 Cor. i. 11), Phœbe in the port of Cenchreæ (Rom. xvi. 1), Lydia at Philippi (Acts xvi. 14).

It is also important, in this connection, to refer to the observations of De Rossi regarding the social position of the earliest Christians in Rome. De Rossi was struck by the fact that the oldest Christian catacombs are also the

richest and most ornamented. He refers particularly to the fine paintings in some portions of the catacombs of Domitilla, and considers that the presence of these paintings can only be explained by there having been some fairly wealthy people among the members of the Church. Moreover, De Rossi found on various tombs the names of the "Cornelii," "Æmilii," "Cæcili" —all names of honourable families in ancient Rome. Paul already had acquaintances that were "of Cæsar's household" (Phil. iv. 22), and it is by no means impossible that the Gospel penetrated beyond the circles of slaves and freedmen, even into the highest classes. Pomponia Græcina, wife of Plautius, was a member of the Christian Church. In the reign of the Emperor Nero, an accusation of "foreign superstition" was brought against her. By this "foreign superstition" there can be meant only Judaism or Christianity, but seeing that in the catacombs of Callixtus the tombs of her descendants have been discovered, it is certainly probable that she was a Christian. A few years later the new faith penetrated into the family of the Emperor, if, that is, Domitilla and her husband Flavius Clemens, who were closely related to the Emperors Domitianus and Titus, were really, like Pomponia Græcina, Christians. Examples like this will probably not have remained entirely exceptional, and in any case they will have to be taken into account.

It must by no means be concluded from the foregoing that there were many rich people

among the earliest Christians, more particularly in the Gentile Christian communities. In the first place, something must be discounted from one of the arguments brought forward by De Rossi, in that, among the "Cornelii," "Æmilii," "Cæcili," etc., there were fairly certainly some freedmen and slaves, who had adopted the name of their masters. Moreover, the New Testament writers offer far more evidence that the greater number of Christians at that time belonged to the lower middle class or to that of the fairly prosperous artisans, or were slaves. Paul speaks, for instance, of the "deep poverty" (Weymouth) of the churches in Macedonia (2 Cor. viii. 2). It is also noticeable that Paul speaks so fully about the slaves in Colossus and Laodicea, and addresses only a single injunction to the masters (Col. iv. 1; Eph. vi. 1; and *cf.* Col. iii. 22; Eph. vi. 5). All this reflects the social conditions among the earliest Christians very definitely. Poor people felt drawn towards a gospel in which such stern warnings were given against riches, and in which "the good news was proclaimed to the poor" (Matt. xi. 5, Weymouth). Slaves were attracted by the preaching of One who had died a slave's death on the cross, and had brought the freedom of the spirit to a people in bondage.

Returning to the subject of the excavations in and beyond the Fayum district, we may state the main reason of their significance to be, that they bring us into direct contact with the very classes of the community in the Roman Empire to

which the great majority of the earliest Christian converts belonged. These converts were largely fishermen, soldiers, slaves, peasants, shopkeepers, petty officials—just the very kind of people in regard to whom the “ostraka” and “papyri” provide us with fuller information. Through the study of them, we now know with what kind of preoccupations their lives were filled. It may be added, here and now, that these investigations have led to a very different evaluation of prevailing moral standards in the pagan world in the period of the Empire than had been hitherto entertained. Generally speaking, the impression gained of manners and morals in pagan Rome from contemporary literature is hardly favourable. It must not be forgotten, however, that this conception is not based on very reliable data, since our knowledge of the then world has hitherto been confined to the life of the upper or ruling classes. The literature at our disposal reflects the ideas and habits of high society, and what is to be found in the writings of the Fathers of the Church is often, undoubtedly, in view of their inherent leaning towards polemics, something of an exaggeration. In regard to the lower classes, at any rate, the excavations have provided us with another side to the picture, where a religious spirit, faithfulness to the marriage bond, and quiet happiness are not to be sought in vain.

Before trying to answer more fully the question as to why the examination of the “ostraka” and “papyri” has given us so new a light on the

New Testament, I will first answer another question: "Why did such a comparatively long time elapse before attention was paid to these links with the past? Has the existence of the papyri been known of, then, for so short a time?"

The first discovery of papyri about which we know much took place in Egypt in 1778. In that year some Arabs found by chance, in the Fayum district, forty or fifty papyrus rolls in an earthenware pot. These Arabs failed to find anywhere a purchaser for the rolls, so they burned them, because, it was said, they gave out in burning such a pleasant odour. Only a single roll was saved, and this roll came into the possession of Cardinal Stefano Borgia, and was known later as the "Charta Borgiana." The contents of this roll were of small importance, for they dealt only with the work of peasants on the Nile banks at Arsinoë in the year 191-92 A.D. But this roll was the first Greek papyrus to be published in Europe, and as such is worthy of mention. At the time this discovery had no further results, for in the eighteenth century there was little interest in such matters. Appreciation of the historical value of such data was yet to come. What had been written in Egypt in the days of the Ptolemies touched no responsive note in eighteenth-century Europe, and in Egypt such rolls did very well as fuel!

It was not till more than forty years later that anything of any real importance was discovered in the way of papyri. Then, in 1820, a collection of documents was discovered in the Serapium at Memphis, dating from the second century B.C.

It was chiefly under the influence of and with the aid of these papyri that the German novelist, Georg Ebers, produced his Egyptian romances. In the following year there appeared near Elephantine one of the books of Homer's Iliad, which was much older than any text that had so far been seen by modern scholars. This papyrus found its way to England. Shortly afterwards a roll was discovered containing the "Lycophron" and other orations of Hypereides. Further discoveries followed. In 1890 there was found the famous work of Aristotle regarding the machinery of government of Athens, and the publication of this text produced a great sensation in academic circles. This book had been lost sight of entirely for about twelve hundred years, and its eventual recovery in its original form had long been despaired of. It had been written between 325 and 322 B.C., either by Aristotle himself or under his supervision. It was known to deal with the history and development of the machinery of government of Athens, and it was also known that Aristotle had made in it a comparison between the laws of his time and those of an earlier period. But the book was nowhere to be found. The text was finally discovered on the back of four papyrus rolls, and published by F. G. Kenyon of the British Museum. The awkward feature of this discovery was that these original documents gave a completely different view of the course of Greek history, and particularly of the legislation of Draco and Solon, than that heretofore held by modern investigators to be correct. The newly

discovered facts differed so completely from the latter-day "results" as to cast a doubt on almost all historical conjectures and reconstructions of ancient history.

One curious thing in connection with all these new discoveries was that they had so far attracted very little general attention and certainly were not realised to have any relation to New Testament studies. In 1863, the famous English divine, J. B. Lightfoot (later Bishop Lightfoot), in a lecture to his students at Cambridge, told them, with reference to a word in the New Testament which was only to be found further in Herodotus, that they must by no means assume that the word in question was never used between the time of Herodotus and that of the New Testament writers. The only thing that must be admitted was that it was not to be found in any of the extant writings dating from that interim period. He considered it very probable that it was in quite general vernacular use. He further made the suggestion, that if some of those letters could be found which the ordinary people of that time used to write to one another, they would prove to be the best auxiliary material for the study of the New Testament vocabulary. Curiously enough, the letters that Lightfoot so much desired to have were actually available in his own day. But his attention had not yet lighted upon them.

The great discovery was not yet made, and was to be made some years later by a German—the famous Professor Adolf Deissmann of Berlin.

While still a young minister at Herborn, he found one day in a library, lying on a table, a book in which were published certain Greek papyri from the Berlin collection. Deissmann turned over the pages of this book more or less idly until he noticed the name of a friend of his at the foot of a page. This excited his curiosity and he began really to read it, and in his reading suddenly realised that the Greek of these papyri was precisely the same kind of language as that of the New Testament. As may be supposed, Deissmann pursued this discovery. In 1885 he published his *Bibelstudien*, and in 1897 *Neue Bibelstudien*,¹ and in 1898 he brought out his world-famous book, *Light from the Ancient East*. This and other works have provided us with a totally new aspect of the New Testament.

Now what was really the significance of Deissmann's discovery?

Long before that time, various peculiarities of the Greek used in the New Testament had struck the attention of scholars. There is an immediately obvious difference between the Greek of the New Testament and that of the authors of the Attic period of the fourth and fifth centuries B.C. Still this was, on further consideration, quite comprehensible. In English literature, if we compare the English of Scott, Shakespeare and Chaucer, we find that here also great differences in grammatical construction can be pointed out. The difference between the Greek of the New

¹ Published together, in an English translation, by A. Grieve, as *Bible Studies* (1901).

Testament, written in the first century A.D., and that of the Attic authors of the fourth and fifth centuries B.C., was by no means impossible of explanation. What was, however, much more difficult to explain was the fact that the Greek of the New Testament differed so sharply from that of the other authors of the first century, such as, for instance, Plutarch. Not only that, there was even a great difference between New Testament Greek and that of the first-century historian, Flavius Josephus, although Josephus was also a Jew, a man of the same nationality as Peter and Paul. Josephus also wrote in Greek, but it is unlike that of the New Testament. The words and grammar are more or less alike. Still the difference does exist. The language of the Biblical writings is simpler, less ornate.

Attempts had already been made on very various lines to account for the peculiar difference between the Greek of the New Testament and that of contemporary Greek authors. By some the difference was assumed to be explicable by the fact that the New Testament had been written principally by Jews, so that it was very probable that their Jewish mode of thought had communicated itself to their mode of expression. Reference was made, in support of this theory, to the contents of the Greek translation of the Old Testament—the Septuagint, as it is called—made between 250 and 110 B.C. (approximately) in Alexandria. This Greek translation of the Old Testament represented the Bible as read, for instance, by Paul, and a knowledge of this version

is unquestionably indispensable for a true understanding of such writings as the Pauline Epistles. Both in the grammar and in the style, the Hebrew is always dimly discernible, and herein might lie also the explanation of the marked difference between the language of the New Testament and that of other contemporary writings.

There were attempts on yet other lines to solve the problem. For instance, stress was laid in this connection on the importance of Aramaic in the lifetime of Jesus. At that period Hebrew was, generally speaking, no longer much in use, and people spoke rather the more colloquial Aramaic. This language was not simply and solely a dialect of Hebrew, but was an independent, related language, which, during the last five centuries B.C., continually spread over larger and larger areas of Western Asia. It may be concluded how general was the use of Aramaic from the explicit declaration of Josephus, that he originally wrote his *History of the Jewish Wars* in Aramaic, in order that Parthians, Babylonians, Arabians, etc., should be able to understand it. It will be remembered that certain portions of the Old Testament also (I refer to Ezra iv. 8 to vi. 18; vii. 12-26; Daniel ii. 4-7, 28 *et seq.*) were written in Aramaic, and, although objections are occasionally raised against this assertion, it is now pretty generally accepted as a certainty that the language spoken by Jesus and His disciples was Aramaic. In the Gospels as they have come down to us, certain sayings of Christ have been preserved which point to this original

Aramaic. On the Cross Jesus spoke these words: "Elohi, Elohi, lama sabachthani?" (Mark xv. 34). This is not Hebrew: it is Aramaic. In Mark v. verse 41, we find the familiar words, "Talitha kumi" (or "koum"), and in Mark vii. 34, "Ephphatha," which is the imperative "Open." These again are Aramaic. The inscription above the Cross was not in Hebrew but in Aramaic (John xix. 20), and when it is stated (in Acts xxi. 40) that Paul spoke to the people "in the Hebrew tongue" (A.V.), we must understand thereby Aramaic. Jesus would surely also have known Greek. We read, for instance, that He spoke with Pilate, who would surely have understood no Aramaic. There is no mention anywhere of an interpreter between Jesus and Pilate. The great probability is that Jesus also knew Greek, but that the language in which He habitually expressed Himself was Aramaic.

This last assertion gains in probability from the researches of scholars such as A. Meyer, G. Dalman, J. Wellhausen, etc. All these workers have attempted to show that the Gospels cannot be explained except on the assumption of an Aramaic background. Of extraordinary interest are the attempts initiated and carried out by Meyer to make some obscure passages in the Gospels more comprehensible. What Meyer did was to translate some of the passages in question into Aramaic, and by so doing he sometimes obtained highly interesting results.

To quote a few examples: John the Baptist

said that God was able "out of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham" (Matt. iii. 9, A.V.). The transition from "stones" to "children" is the easier when we see that the word for "stones" is in the Aramaic "abnaja" and for "children" "b'naja." This saying of John's is thus a play upon words. In Matt. vii. verse 6, A.V., we read: "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine." This is a somewhat surprising combination of similes, for what connection is there to be found between pearls and that which is holy? Meyer points out that the words for "ring" and "holy thing" in Aramaic are very similar, so that one word could easily be read for the other. The Rabbis were fond of comparing God's law with a ring set with pearls. The ring was thus the whole of the law, and the pearls the separate commandments. If the text be read: "Give not the ring to the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine," the meaning of the saying of Jesus remains unaltered, but the connection becomes much clearer.

Again, in Matthew xx. verse 22, we read that Jesus asked: "Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" (A.V.).¹ The baptism spoken of here is generally taken to mean a baptism of blood, but is not the connection between drinking and being baptised somewhat curious? After drinking one would

¹ In the R.V. and in Weymouth and Moffatt the second question is omitted.

expect to hear of eating, not of being baptised. According to Meyer, the text ought to be read in that sense. Baptism—dipping—is here none other than the “dipping of the sop” (A.V.), as performed by Jesus at the Passover supper, and in Aramaic this word was often used in a general sense to mean eating. Jesus was therefore asking His disciples: “Can you drink what I drink and eat what I eat?” That is to say, “Can you share My life, My work?” The disciples answered that they could. Whereupon Jesus replied to them, that to share in His life here on earth, He could promise them, “but to sit at My right hand or at My left, it is not for Me to give, for it belongs to those for whom it is prepared by My Father.” As a final illustration, I may mention that, if Jesus spoke the words translated, “This is my body . . . this is my blood,” in Aramaic, He cannot have used the auxiliary “is,” because its equivalent does not exist in Aramaic. This point is not without influence on the authority of the Catholic interpretation of the words used in the Communion Service.

I have dealt with these experiments in some detail here, because they show clearly what great importance must be attached, in an attempt to reconstruct the conditions in the time of Jesus, to studies in Aramaic. But it must not, for a moment, be supposed that Greek was not a spoken language in common use. On the contrary, from the time of Alexander the Great onwards—he died in 323 B.C.—Greek became virtually a universal world language, the know-

ledge of which would carry a traveller anywhere. Before the reign of Alexander and his immediate predecessor, Greece was divided into a number of petty states, each speaking its own dialect of Greek. The Greek of Athens and that of Thebes, for instance, showed very little mutual resemblance. This condition prevailed until Philip of Macedonia, father of Alexander the Great, put an end to it, by conquering Greece, and bringing all the small states under a single monarchy. That was the end of the independence of the separate states. Then came Alexander the Great, who took his Greek soldiers with him on military expeditions in all directions into distant countries; his army marched even to India. The great importance of the life-work of Alexander was that it made of Greece a single unit, and spread Hellenism far and wide. By degrees uniformity of language also came about. The Greek that emerged became the language of commerce and daily intercourse over a very widespread area. Even in Rome Greek was spoken, to such an extent, indeed, that the Emperor Marcus Aurelius wrote his *Meditations* in Greek, while this is also the language of Paul's Epistle to the Romans. In Egypt and in Persia, in Spain, in Rome, in Alexandria and on the banks of the Nile—everywhere Greek served for travel and commerce. This was particularly true in the period immediately before and after the birth of Christ—the first century B.C. and perhaps the first two centuries of the Christian era. Hence it is that the Apostle Paul was able to give his message everywhere—in

Palestine, in Sicily, in Rome and elsewhere—in Greek. He had no need to learn a new language each time he entered a new mission field.

In Palestine, however, Aramaic was spoken in addition to Greek. Aramaic was the vernacular language of the country—the language of the “common people”—and this vernacular was most probably used by Jesus in His preaching. One might perhaps illustrate the position in His day by the following comparison. In North Wales the country people speak Welsh with one another, but they can also speak English. Without carrying the comparison to a complete parallel, we may with all reverence say that it was as if Jesus knew English but spoke Welsh with His disciples.¹

It is not possible to go further into the objections that have been raised against the theory that the difference between the New Testament Greek and that of contemporary Greek writers must be explained by the influence of Aramaic. Neither is it possible to deal at any length with the contention that the New Testament is written in a language of its own, “the language of the Holy Spirit,” and that this is the explanation of its difference from the Greek of the authors of the period. It was long supposed that all that had to do with the Bible must be regarded as something completely “isolated” in the history of civilisation. There was considered to be a “sacred or esoteric archæology” and also a

¹ The author's comparison is with Friesland. I find that Moulton also makes the comparison with North Wales.—*Tr.*

“sacred or esoteric language.” Only the religion of the Bible was of God. All other religions were pseudo-religions, wholly of the evil one. Behind this whole conception there burnt a warmer fire of religious conviction than has often been realised. Its upholders had themselves been gripped by the revelation of God in the Bible story of redemption; they feared any weakening or dilution of its message, and thought they were buttressing most securely the unshakable certainty of that which God had given through Israel, and at its highest in Christ, by a rigid doctrine of inspiration and revelation, according to which the Bible was, as far as possible, isolated like an island paradise from any intimate contact with other continents or islands. The researches of the last couple of centuries have taught us, quite unmistakably, that this conception is untenable. It may safely be said that, among present-day theologians, there is no single one of any eminence who is prepared to give complete support to this “method of isolation.” Researches into the history of religion have indeed shown us clearly wherein the greatness and the peculiar importance of the Jewish-Christian religion has consisted and still consists, but, in so doing, students have had to abandon all kinds of seventeenth-century premises. The relation between Christianity and the other religions is not that of radiant light and pitch-darkness; there is no “sacred archæology,” and still less is there a “sacred language,” a “language of the Holy Spirit.”

With this last assertion we have returned, unwittingly, right to the heart of our subject. We have seen that the difference between the Greek of the New Testament and that of contemporary Greek authors could not be explained completely by the influence either of Jewish modes of thought, or of the "Septuagint" version of the Old Testament, or of Aramaic, on the language of the biblical authors. But still less can the difference be explained by the theory of a "language of the Holy Spirit," not only because such a theory is inherently difficult to maintain, but because—and this is actually the root of the matter—Deissmann's discoveries have made such a theory utterly untenable. The great importance of the discovery of Adolf Deissmann is, indeed, inherent in the fact that, while the New Testament is certainly speaking the language of the Holy Spirit—in Christ we receive the perfect revelation of God—yet the Holy Spirit did not speak in any unique or peculiar tongue, but that, rather—to echo Moulton—the Holy Spirit spoke the *vernacular*, the language of the people.¹

This discovery of Deissmann's is of such far-reaching importance, that one can, at first sight, hardly grasp all the logical consequences of it. It has now been shown that the New Testament was, for the greater part, written in the spoken language in common use at the time when it was written down. The authors were far from being primarily interested in the literary impression created. What *was* the concern of the New

¹ Moulton, *From Egyptian Rubbish-Heaps*, p. 26.

Testament writers was to be “understood of the people”—to be comprehensible to the man in the street. And the common people did understand them, because their language differed so little from the vernacular—the so-called *Koinē*—in general use. Where points of difference do arise, their origin lies not in a deviation from the ordinary speech of the period, but in the special circumstances, peculiar to themselves, under which the authors of the New Testament were working. It must not be forgotten that there are various translated passages in the New Testament. There are in it references, quoted or implied, to the Hebrew Old Testament, but there are also passages which derive from an Aramaic original.

All these special conditions combine to explain the presence in the New Testament of words that are not to be found elsewhere, but the number of these is much smaller than was supposed some years ago. At an earlier date, the grammars and dictionaries used to reserve a considerable amount of space for words and grammatical constructions in regard to which it was supposed that they were only to be found in the New Testament. In one of the early works of Dr Kennedy on the sources of New Testament Greek, he estimated the number of so-called “purely New Testament expressions” at about 550. Since the researches of Deissmann and others, this estimate had been reduced to about 50. The remaining 500 have been relegated to the vernacular of the period, as it

can be studied in the "ostraka" and "papyri." Speaking broadly, it may be said that of the 5000 or so words occurring in the New Testament, 3000 are to be met with in the Attic authors, while the remaining 2000 are borrowed from the contemporary vernacular—the *Koinē*. The 50 words peculiar to the New Testament are excluded from these totals.

It will hardly need to be said that, following on Deissmann's remarkable discovery, exact linguistic studies of the papyri were undertaken in various universities in many countries. Perhaps there had never, since the Renaissance, been any period in the history of the Christian Church in which so great an interest has been manifested in the Greek language as at the present day. Deissmann, in his earlier years, was almost wholly dependent on the papyri from Oxyrhynchus, as published by Grenfell and Hunt. But each year more treasures were unearthed. The pioneers, such as Grenfell and Hunt, already mentioned, have rendered most signal services in this respect, but others have not been wanting to "follow in their train." Thanks to the zeal of these investigators, more than 1800 texts have been published in the fifteen volumes of "Oxyrhynchus Papyri." Should the whole of the Oxyrhynchus collection be published, it would need fifteen more such volumes. So much has been found in this city alone. Four great volumes of texts from the Museum at Berlin have been published in Germany, and a fifth is in preparation. Good work has been done in the same field by indi-

viduals and organisations in Vienna, Leipzig, Strasburg, Florence, Geneva, Ryssel, Hamburg, Munich, etc. Of the American investigators, the most prominent has been Prof. Goodspeed of Chicago. Up to the present, about 10,000 documents have been published, but a great many papyri are still awaiting publication.

Remarkable interest and activity has been shown by the grammarians, following on the work of Deissmann. In 1901 Thumb brought out a big book on the *Koinē* in German, and five years later the famous English divine, J. H. Moulton, astonished the academic world by his *Introduction to the New Testament Greek*. Of subsequent publications, particular mention should be made of a voluminous book by A. T. Robertson, *Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* (1914), which covers almost the whole of the grammatical field in the light of the recent discoveries. During the last ten years or so, various other grammars, and also dictionaries, have appeared, the authors of the most important of which are Van Blass, De Zwaan, Nägeli, Preuschen, Souter and Milligan.

III

NEW SAYINGS OF JESUS—PRIVATE LETTERS— AGREEMENTS AND INVITATIONS

IN making our brief survey of certain of the important discoveries made in the course of the investigations, attention must be paid, first and foremost, to the newly discovered “sayings of Jesus.”

Every diligent reader of the New Testament knows that the Gospel of John assures us that still more sayings and doings of Jesus were known to its writer than the fourth evangelist had himself noted down for us. We read in John xx. verse 30, “Many another sign did Jesus perform in presence of his disciples, which is not recorded in this book.” John xxi. has as its closing verse (25): “Now there is much else that Jesus did—so much, that if it were written down in detail, I do not suppose the world itself could hold the written records” (Moffatt).

If we turn up Acts xx. 35, we read that Paul, in his farewell address to the elders of Ephesus and Miletus, quotes a saying of Jesus that does not appear in the Gospels, when he says: “In all things I have set you an example, showing you that, by working as I do, you ought to help the weak, and to bear in mind the words of the Lord

Jesus, how He Himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive' " (Weymouth). The whole of the four Gospels may be searched in vain for this saying.

In other passages, in the Epistles, for instance, Paul evidently had access to sayings and commands of Jesus of which we can find no trace in the Gospels. In the First Epistle to the Thesalonians Paul writes a word of consolation in the affliction that had fallen on the Church through the death of various of its members. There Paul says (iv. 15), "For we tell you, as the Lord has told us, that we the living, who survive till the Lord comes, are by no means to take precedence of those who have fallen asleep" (Moffatt). This appears to be a reference to an assurance given by Jesus, but the Gospels tell us nothing of it. The case is exactly the same in 1 Corinthians vii. 10-11, where Paul is dealing with marriage and divorce, and where he expressly states: "For married people these are my instructions (and they are the Lord's, not mine). A wife is not to separate from her husband—if she has separated, she must either remain single or be reconciled to him—and a husband must not put away his wife" (Moffatt). The saying of Jesus quoted here will be sought in vain in the Gospels. It goes much further than what Jesus said about this subject in the Sermon on the Mount (*cf.* Matt. v. 27).

All these examples show plainly that the New Testament itself provides evidence of the known existence of sayings of Jesus which were not recorded in the Gospels.

Turning our attention to the writings of the early Fathers of the Church, and of other writers in the first centuries of the Christian era, we find that numerous so-called "sayings of Jesus" have been preserved in these contexts. In the most ancient sermon we possess, in the Second Epistle of Clement of Rome to the Corinthians (*circa* 140 A.D.), the following dialogue between Jesus and Peter is reported: "The Lord said: 'Ye shall be as sheep in the midst of the wolves!' Peter answered and said: 'What if the wolves shall tear in pieces the sheep?' Jesus said unto Peter: 'Let not the sheep fear the wolves after death.'" (Bishop Wake's translation into English, perhaps better: "When once the sheep are dead, they have no need to fear the wolves any more.") Then follows the well-known exhortation, as in Matthew x. 28, not to fear them which kill the body but are not able to kill the soul, but "him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (A.V.).

A number of quotations from the Gospels are made by Justin Martyr (died *circa* 165 A.D.), but he also mentions this saying of Jesus: "In whatsoever I may find you, in this also will I judge you." This saying is evidently intended as an injunction to be watchful, since the outcome of the trial will depend on the condition of the man at the moment when judgment comes upon him. Clement of Alexandria (died 220 A.D.) mentions a saying of Jesus: "Seek what is great, and the little things shall be added." Origen, the pupil of Clement of Alexandria, also quotes this saying,

but adds a complementary sentence : " Seek the heavenly things, and the earthly shall be given you therewith." In another work Clement quotes the saying : " Be ye skilful money-changers." Origen in his writings mentions two other sayings of Jesus that are not to be found in the Gospels. The first is : " Because of the weak was I weak, and because of the hungry did I hunger, and because of the thirsty did I thirst." Still more remarkable is the other saying which Origen has handed down to us : " He who is near to Me is near to the fire, and he who is far from Me is far from the Kingdom." Jerome (died *circa* 420 A.D.) also gives us a saying of Jesus : " And in nowise shalt thou be tender-hearted unless thou viewest thy brother in charity." ¹

Not only in the writings of the Fathers and other authors of the first centuries of the Christian era, but also in certain manuscripts of the New Testament, do we find sayings of Jesus that do not appear in the Gospels in any of the accepted versions. One of the best known of these is an addition to Luke vi. 4 *et seq.*, which has been preserved in the so-called Codex Cantabrigiensis. At the beginning of the sixth chapter of Luke, we are told how Jesus became involved in a dispute with the Pharisees, because His

¹ This work of Jerome's does not, like the others cited, exist in a standard English translation. The version quoted is supplied by Vacher Burch, who bases it on the fact that Jerome is commenting on Eph. iv. 30 to v. 3. Cobern (*op. cit.*, p. 244) gives a rather different translation : " Never be joyful except when ye have looked upon your brother with love." The word translated " tender-hearted " is " lactus."—*Tr.*

disciples had, on the Sabbath Day, plucked some ears of corn, which they rubbed in their hands and ate. In reply to His opponents, Jesus appeals to the example of David, who took the cakes of shewbread, ate of them, and gave them to those who were with him, although only the priests were allowed to eat of the shewbread. The argument ends with the words of Jesus: "The Son of man is Lord even over the Sabbath" (verse 5, Moffatt). But in the Codex Cantabrigiensis we find an appendix to this story interpolated before the following incident, which may originally have been written as a comment on the margin of an earlier text, and later have crept into the text itself. "On the same day, seeing a man working on the Sabbath, He said unto him: 'Oh man, if thou knowest what thou doest, blessed art thou; but if thou knowest not, then art thou accursed and a breaker of the Law.'"

It is very probable that we have to do here with an actual occurrence in the life of Jesus. The meaning of this saying would be that a disciple who was working on the Sabbath, in the full realisation of his freedom, as a disciple of Jesus, in regard to its observance, was doing right; but if he were working on the Sabbath without any realisation of the freedom brought by Jesus, and merely out of indifference or greed of gain, then the curse would fall on him. Side by side with this example from the Codex Cantabrigiensis, we may place a passage from another of the ancient MSS., in which the second petition of the Lord's Prayer does not run, "Thy kingdom come,"

but, "Thy Holy Spirit come upon us and purify us." Here again it is not impossible that we have to do with a genuine saying of Jesus.

It would be quite easy to add many more examples to those already given of quoted sayings of Jesus that do not appear in the Gospels, both out of early Christian literature and out of ancient Bible MSS. In various other places sayings of Jesus are found, which remind us continually that by no means all the teaching ^{words} of Jesus has been preserved for us in the Gospels. Mention is made, for instance, in the Mohammedan scriptures of various utterances of Jesus. One of these is as follows :

"Leave the world and meditate over death. To a believer death comes with good which has no evil after it, but to a wicked man it comes with an evil which has no good after it."

In the North of India the following utterance has been met with on a gateway at Fatehpur Sikri : "Jesus—peace be with Him—said : This world is only a bridge ; pass over it, but do not build your house on it."

Such a saying as this is more reminiscent of a Buddhist who despises the world than akin to the teaching of Jesus.

Of much greater importance than the sayings of Jesus just quoted are, without doubt, those which were discovered in 1896-97 in the neighbourhood of the ancient Oxyrhynchus, on a sheet of papyrus in a rubbish-heap. The papyrus sheet on which these sayings were written was merely a single leaf which had presumably once

been the eleventh of a "codex" or primitive book; the beginning and end are damaged, and there are also holes in the remainder, so that it is frequently necessary to fill up the resultant gaps as well as may be. The great significance of this discovery by Grenfell and Hunt was, that on the papyrus in question there were written seven or eight short sentences, all beginning with the same ever-recurrent formula: "Jesus saith." There is absolutely no internal connection between them, nor is any historical connection mentioned. What we have here is a set of disconnected utterances, set down in the third century A.D., some of which must certainly be regarded as authentic sayings of Jesus. Here are some of these sayings.

"Jesus said: Except ye fast to the world, ye shall in no wise find the Kingdom of God, and except ye make the Sabbath a real Sabbath, ye shall not see the Father."

This saying, the second on the papyrus sheet, has given rise to a great deal of discussion, because it was not known in what sense the words regarding the observance of the Sabbath were to be interpreted. Many supposed that the reference here was, in a literal sense, to the keeping of the Jewish Sabbath, so that no one could enter the Kingdom of God who did not strictly observe the Sabbath Day. Rendel Harris, Von Harnack, and other scholars have, however, pointed out that these words must not be understood literally but figuratively. It was, indeed, apparent from the writings of the Fathers, that

the expressions "keeping the Sabbath" or "sabbatising the Sabbath" did not mean observing the seventh day of the week, but rather "keeping oneself pure in heart and deed." The words "fasting to the world" also occurred in the patristic writings, in particular those of Clement, and were there equivalent to "dying to the world." The meaning of the saying now becomes clear. Unless you break with the world, you shall not find the Kingdom of God, and unless you consecrate your life in the service of God, you shall not behold the Father.

The third saying on the papyrus runs : "Jesus saith : I stood in the midst of the world, and in the flesh was I seen of them ; and I found all men drunken, and none found I athirst among them, and My soul grieved over the sons of men, because they are blind in their hearts and see not." The end of this saying is illegible. Although we are reminded by this of utterances such as are found in John vii. 35 and Matthew v. 6, the saying as a whole gives a certain impression of rhetoric, which is something not found at all in the Gospels. It is remarkable how Jesus here is placed on an absolutely different level from mankind. The closer we get to primitive Christianity, and the more nearly we return to the time of Jesus, so much more also is what the Churches have called His "Divinity" assumed.

The beginning of the fourth saying is not very clear, and it may require disentangling from the end of the preceding one. It has been read, however, as follows : Jesus saith : "Wherever

there are two, they are not without God ; and wherever there is one alone, I say, I am with him. Raise the stone and there thou shalt find Me ; cleave the wood and there am I." This is distinctly reminiscent of the words in Matthew xviii. 20 and xxviii. 20. Here the emphasis is laid on the word "alone," and the meaning is this : when the disciple has withdrawn from the world, then is Jesus certainly with him, just as certainly as are the tools of his daily work. In no case may the words, "Raise the stone and there thou shalt find Me ; cleave the wood and there am I," be misinterpreted in a pantheistic sense. What is meant is, in the raising of the stone and the cleaving of the wood, you shall experience My holy fellowship. Christ is with the believer even while he is at work.

The fifth saying runs : "Jesus saith : A prophet is not acceptable in his own country, neither doth a physician work cures upon them that know him." We are familiar with the beginning of this utterance from Luke iv. 24. There is every ground for supposing the second part also to be authentic.

The sixth saying is : "Jesus saith : A city built upon the top of a high hill and established can neither fall nor be hid." We are familiar with a very similar utterance in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. v. 14). This saying is probably also rightly attributed to Jesus.

These are the sayings of Jesus discovered in the years 1896-97. When this first papyrus came to light, it was not expected that further

sayings of Jesus would be discovered within a comparatively short time. In February 1903, however, Grenfell and Hunt returned to Oxyrhynchus once more, and in the course of their excavations they again found some sayings of Jesus. These they published in the following year as "New Sayings of Jesus." Five utterances were discovered this time, which had been noted down by a Christian on the back of a sheet of papyrus, about 250 A.D. The front had already been used for another purpose, a list of various pieces of land in Oxyrhynchus having been written on it. Taking them as a whole, the sayings in this second collection are not of such intense interest as those of the first set. A curious feature of the sayings in this second collection is that they almost all bear a definitely mystical or Johannine character. In all probability, whoever wrote down this collection lived in a mental atmosphere strongly influenced by the primitive Christian speculative ideas that find their classic expression in the Gospel of John.

The usually accepted English translation (Grenfell and Hunt, and most commentators, including Cobern) of these last "Sayings of Jesus" is as follows :

"These are the [wonderful] words which Jesus the living [Lord] spoke to [Philip?] and Thomas : and He said unto [them] everyone that hearkens to these words shall never taste of death."

"Jesus saith : Let him who seeks [not] cease until he finds, and when he finds he shall be

astonished ; astonished he shall reach the Kingdom, and having reached the Kingdom he shall rest."

Or, as translated by Deissmann and Heinrici :¹ " Let him that seeketh not cease until he findeth, and when he findeth he shall be amazed, and having been amazed he shall reign, and having reigned he shall rest."

The third saying runs : " Jesus saith : [Ye ask] who are those that draw us [to the Kingdom if] the Kingdom is in Heaven ? . . . The fowls of the air and all beasts that are under the earth or upon the earth and the fishes of the sea [these are they which draw] you ; and the Kingdom of Heaven is within you, and whosoever shall know himself shall find it. [Strive therefore] to know yourselves, and ye shall be aware that ye are the sons of the [Almighty] Father."² . . ."

The next legible portion of the papyrus runs : " Jesus saith : A man shall not hesitate . . . to ask concerning his place [in the Kingdom. Ye shall know] many that are first shall be last and the last first and [they shall have eternal life (?)]."

The fragment continues : " Jesus saith : [Everything that is not] before thy face and that which is hidden from thee shall be revealed to thee. [For there is nothing] hidden which shall not be made manifest, nor buried which shall not [be raised up]."

¹ This is the equivalent of the version given by the author, following Heinrici. See p. 59 for further comment.

² The translation or reconstruction of the English scholars differs in slight details from that in the Dutch original of this book. Deissmann has a completely different reconstruction with an opposite meaning.—*Tr.*

The last saying is so mutilated that it is almost completely illegible. Possibly it should read thus: "His disciples question Him and say: How shall we fast and how shall we pray, how shall we exercise charity and how must we observe the Sabbath Day? Jesus saith: Do not as the hypocrites, but look up in all truth to the Father, who is hidden in the heavens."¹

On closer consideration of the sayings of Jesus just quoted, the first thing that strikes us is that here an introduction to the sayings has been preserved. This introduction is reminiscent of the Gospel of John; its character is distinctly Johannine. The first saying that follows it lays strong emphasis on the requirements that must be fulfilled by those who desire to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.

Clement of Alexandria quoted the latter part of this first saying,² attributing it to the apocryphal "Gospel of the Hebrews," so that many scholars suppose that in this second collection of sayings of Jesus we possess a portion of that Gospel. In connection with the wonder—the glad surprise—at the discovery of truth, we may be reminded of the joy of the woman who found the lost piece of silver (Luke xv. 9).

The second of these sayings is somewhat surprising. Jesus did certainly set up both animals and plants as examples to His disciples. We read in Matthew vi. 26: "Behold the fowls of the

¹ This is a translation of Heinrici's reconstruction.—*Tr.*

² The English translation is in the form nearest to Deissmann's reading: "He that wonders shall reign, and he that reigns shall rest."—*Tr.*

air ; for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns ; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they ?” And in verses 28 and 29 we find the words : “ Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow ; they toil not, neither do they spin : and yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these ” (A.V.).

Still Jesus does not seem ever to have regarded animals or plants as things that could “ draw ” men into the Kingdom of Heaven. It is also doubtful whether Jesus ever taught that self-knowledge was the way to the Kingdom. It is God who draws men to Himself (John vi. 44). The saying of Jesus in Luke xvii. 22 cannot be appealed to here, for that should read : “ The Kingdom of God is in your midst,” or “ within your circle.” God is already King in the intimate circle of the disciples.

The saying that follows reminds us of sayings of Christ in the Gospels, such as are to be found in Matthew xx. 30 and Mark x. 35. The fourth saying confirms what we read in Matthew x. 26, Mark iv. 22 and Luke xii. 2. The fifth saying finds its explanation in the second of the earlier series.

In addition to these two collections of sayings of Jesus, Grenfell and Hunt published a remarkable passage from a Gospel which they found on a sheet of parchment at Oxyrhynchus. The passage includes part of a conversation with Jesus, and there is such a glow of reality about it that I

feel impelled to concur with Von Harnack, when he recognises it as a passage of real value. Cobern (p. 229) quotes the passage as under :¹

“And He took them and brought them into the very place of purification, and was walking in the Temple. And a certain Pharisee, a chief priest, whose name was Levi, met them, and said to the Saviour: ‘Who gave Thee leave to walk in this place of purification, and to see these holy vessels, when Thou hast not washed nor yet have Thy disciples bathed their feet? But defiled Thou hast walked in this Temple, which is a pure place, wherein no other man walks, except he has washed himself and changed his garments, neither does he venture to see the holy vessels.’ And the Saviour straightway stood still, with His disciples, and answered him: ‘Art thou then, being here in the Temple, clean?’ He saith unto him: ‘I am clean; for I washed in the pool of David, and having descended by one staircase, I ascended by another, and I put on white and clean garments, and then I came and looked upon these holy words (*sic*).’

“And the Saviour answered and said unto him: ‘Woe, ye blind who see not. Thou hast washed in these running waters, wherein dogs and swine have been cast night and day, and hast cleansed and wiped the outside skin, which also the harlots and flute girls anoint and wash and wipe and beautify for the lust of men; but within they are full of scorpions and all wickedness. But I and My

¹ With rather more reservation as to its authenticity.—*Tr.*

disciples, who thou sayest have not bathed, have been dipped in the waters of eternal life, which come from . . . But woe unto thee ' . . . ”

This narrative, which need by no means be regarded as purely imaginary, is preceded on the page by a fragment of an apocalyptic discourse attributed to Jesus ; but this upper part is so mutilated that it has become almost completely illegible.

Of greater interest to us is a saying of Jesus found elsewhere : “ Men must give account of every good word which they shall not speak.” Another saying was published by Jacoby in 1900 from a Coptic fragment : “ I have revealed to you all My glory, and I have told you all its power and the mystery of your apostleship.” Naturally, in addition to reputed sayings of Jesus, there were found also various fragments of gospels and epistles. Among these, mention should be made of a fourth-century MS. of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and a scrap of the first page of a Greek New Testament, dating from the third century. This last fragment is about a hundred years older than any extant MS. of the New Testament.

It is often far from easy to read the texts found. Papyrus is extremely brittle. In many cases there are numerous holes, undamaged portions on which the words are plainly legible alternating with damaged portions on which all or part of the words are lost. Nevertheless, practice has shown that a certain degree of fluency in the deciphering of such papyri is fairly quickly

acquired. It is just as with the reading of handwritten matter in general. When once the manner of forming and spacing the letters has become familiar, it becomes possible to identify more and more of the words.

In considering these lately discovered sayings of Jesus, the question may finally be asked, whether they have taught us anything actually new in regard to His person or teaching. From the devotional standpoint, this question must be answered in the negative. These Egyptian discoveries, as a whole, are of great importance in increasing our knowledge of the historical setting of the Gospels, but they have not actually either deepened or widened our knowledge of the teaching or person of Christ. What we *need* to know about the Jesus of history we find in the four Gospels preserved for us in the New Testament. The more closely one studies the most ancient documentary material of Christian history, and the Canon of Scripture itself, the more convinced one becomes that the Early Church, in preserving for us the familiar Gospels according to Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, chose out the very best that there was in the way of narrative matter concerning the life and death of Jesus, and that they were right in regarding the various other gospels, or larger or shorter collections of "sayings of Jesus," as unworthy of a place in the New Testament.

Turning to some of the more general historical material now at our disposal, it should be said that among the most interesting matter restored

to light through the investigation of the papyri are the private letters, a few of which, in the English translation of their discoverers, as quoted in the books of Cobern, Deissmann and Moulton, I will include here. It is naturally such letters that give us the most authentic and vivid impression of the conditions of life in ancient Egypt. What is written in a letter is usually not intended for public perusal, and is often of a most intimate character.

The first of these letters is a communication from the "wealthy Egyptian" Demophon to Ptolemæus, "a police official."¹ The document dates from about the year 245 B.C., and was discovered and published by Grenfell and Hunt. The letter is about the preparations being made by this Egyptian family for a festival. Demophon himself is the host. His wife and daughters want to have the sacrifice made to the accompaniment of pipes (or flutes) and castanets. The musicians must be irreproachably dressed. There are also orders to be given for the meal, for cooking utensils, for service, etc. In the height of the bustle a slave has decamped, so the servant problem is urgent. The transport of the musicians and the stores has to be arranged. Demophon's friend, the police official Ptolemæus, will doubtless arrange for some policemen to accompany the boat. Money is no object.

The text of the letter is as follows :

"Demophon to Ptolemæus, Greeting! Send us by all means the piper Petoys, with both the

¹ Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East*, p. 164.

Phrygian pipes and the others. And if it is necessary to spend anything, pay it. Thou shalt receive it from us. And send us also Zenobius the effeminate, with tabret, and cymbals and rattles. For the women have need of him at the sacrifice. And let him have also raiment as fair as may be. And fetch also the kid from Aristion and send it to us. Yea, and if thou hast taken the slave, deliver him to Semptheus, that he may bring him to us. And send us also cheeses, as many as thou canst, and new earthenware, and herbs of every kind, and delicacies, if thou hast any. Farewell! Put them on board and guards with them who will help in bringing the boat over."

On the back is the direction: "To Ptolemæus."

The next letter will be found in Deissmann's *Light from the Ancient East*, p. 176, and I quote from his comment on it. "Philo and Taonnophris, a married pair at Oxyrhynchus, have lost a son by death, and Irene, a friend of the sorrowing mother, wishes to express her sympathy." Irene herself has once lost her (son? husband?) Didymas, and she can thus completely feel with the grief of her friend. Then she tries to give a word of comfort. She tells how she and all her family have "fulfilled all the duties customary in such cases" (prayers? sacrifices?). The letter ends on a note of resignation; Irene feels her own powerlessness. The text is as under:—

"Irene to Taonnophris and Philo, good com-

fort. I am as sorry and weep for the departed one as I wept for Didymas. And all things, whatsoever were fitting, I have done, and all mine, Epaphroditus and Thermuthion and Philion and Apollonius and Plantas. But nevertheless, against such things one can do nothing. Therefore comfort ye one another. Fare ye well. Athyr 1 (28th October)."

Endorsed on the back: "To Taonnophris and Philo."

The significance of this letter becomes most clear when we consider the injunction to resignation, with which this letter of condolence closes. Deissmann says: "St Paul doubtless was thinking of such despairing souls in his letter to Thessalonica, when he inserted these words of comfort for the Christians in trouble for their dead: 'But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope,' " culminating in the certainty: "and so shall we ever be with the Lord." He immediately adds, in conclusion, the exhortation: "Wherefore, comfort one another with these words." . . . "Behind St Paul's words there is not the resignation of the 'others,' but a victorious certitude triumphing over death." Herein is the certainty, that the power of death is vanquished in essence through the risen Christ.

Another letter, and one which has been much discussed, is a slangy little note from an Egyptian boy Theon to his father of the same name, dating from the second or third century of the

Christian era. The papyrus was found by Grenfell and Hunt, and was published by them in the "Oxyrhynchus Papyri." Its contents are briefly as follows. Theon is a troublesome little fellow. His mother had said once: "He is driving me frantic,¹ send him away." His father too is in despair. The father has a journey to Alexandria in view, and the little son is determined to go with him. Now the father cannot possibly take him, so he says that he is just going to take a short journey to the town (probably Oxyrhynchus), but from there he sets off for Alexandria. That happened on the 7th January. The father afterwards regretted having taken his little boy in in this way, and sends him some fruit as a present. Little Theon notices how long his father is staying away, and suddenly realises the whole trick, and also why he received this present. On the 13th January he writes a furious letter to his father in real schoolboy language. He has heard that his father is making a halt *en route*, and makes another demand to be taken with him. He makes all kinds of threats of what he will do if his father won't take him. Finally, and very artfully, he uses his mother's despair as an argument. Here is the text:

"Theon to Theon his father, greeting! Thou hast done well!² Thou hast not carried me with thee to the town. If thou wilt not carry me with

¹ Moulton translates this, "He quite upsets me," and says the word is in the same sense as that used in Acts xvii. 6 of the revolutionary teaching of the Christian preachers who had "turned the world upside down," p. 37.—Tr.

² This ironic phrase would, from a twentieth-century boy, be: "That was a nice thing to do."—Tr.

thee to Alexandria, I will not write thee a letter, nor speak thee, nor wish thee health. But if thou goest to Alexandria,¹ I will not take hand from thee, nor greet thee again henceforth. If thou wilt not carry me, these things come to pass. My mother also said to Aristarchus: 'He driveth me mad: away with him.' But thou hast done well!² Thou hast sent me *great* gifts—locust beans! They deceived us there on the 12th day, when thou didst sail. Finally, send for me, I beseech thee. If thou sendest not, I will not eat nor drink. Even so!³ Fare thee well, I pray. Tybi 18 (13th January)."

On the back is the direction: "Deliver to Theon from Theonas his son." A remarkable feature of this direction is that the little rogue uses his pet name, perhaps to soften his father's heart. The whole style and tone of the letter is so absolutely boyish, and its abruptness typical of childish excitement. It is clear that Theonas could not have been classed among the tractable boys, but it is rather hard on him that this particular letter should have been so well preserved.

Another letter that certainly deserves attention here is one from a "prodigal son," Antonius Longus, to his mother Nilus, dating from the second century A.D., and discovered in the Fayum. I quote again from Deissmann's comments. "Antonius Longus, of Caranis in the Fayum, has

¹ *I.e.* without me (Van Rhyn).

² This ironic phrase would, from a twentieth-century boy, be: "That was a nice thing to do."—*Tr.*

³ Or, "So that's that!"—*Tr.*

quarrelled with his (widowed?) mother Nilus, and left the village." The fault lay with the son and his disreputable manner of life. "It fares ill with him in the strange country; he is in such a wretched plight that his clothes fall from him in rags.¹ In such a state . . . it is impossible for him to return home. He must go back—he realises that. . . . All this misery he has brought upon himself by his own fault. . . . He remembers his mother in prayer daily to the Lord Serapis," and hopes for an opportunity of meeting her again. "Then he meets an acquaintance" (whose name, almost illegible, seems to be Posthumus), . . . who had met his mother when she was on the return journey from Arsinoë to Caranis. He told the son how the mother had counted on finding her boy at Arsinoë. "Unfortunately Posthumus recounted to the disappointed mother the whole scandalous story of the runaway once more, reckoning up his debts for her edification to the last obol. That is the occasion of the letter: gratitude to the mother for having looked for him, as he had not ventured to hope." He is also very much annoyed with Posthumus's officiousness. Antonius now writes a letter full of mistakes, for he is little practised in writing. He calls himself by a more intimate form of his name—*Antonis*—"and, after a moving description of his misery, there comes a complete confession of his guilt and a passionate entreaty for reconciliation. But in spite of everything, he

¹ Moulton (*op. cit.*, p. 44) says he describes his clothes as being "in a rotten state," in very much the modern English slang sense.—*Tr.*

would rather remain in his misery . . . than return home and be still one single obol in debt to the usurers. The mother will understand the hint and satisfy the creditors before the son's return." When that is done, she must come herself, and receive her son back into the old happy relations. The end of the letter is very difficult to read. This is the text of it :

"Antonius Longus to Nilus his mother many greetings ! And continually do I pray that thou art in health. I make intercession for thee day by day to the Lord Serapis. I would thou shouldst understand that I had no hope that thou wouldst go up to the metropolis. And therefore I came not to the city. But I was ashamed to come to Caranis, because I walk about in rags. I write to thee that I am naked. I beseech thee, mother, be reconciled to me. Furthermore, I know what I have brought upon myself. I have been chastened even as is meet. I know that I have sinned. I have heard from Postumus(?) who met thee in the country about Arsinoë and out of season told thee all things. Knowest thou not that I had rather be maimed than know that I still owe a man an obol ? . . . Come thyself ! . . . I have heard that . . . I beseech thee . . . I almost . . . I beseech thee . . . I will . . . not . . . do otherwise."

Here the papyrus breaks off. On the back is the address : "To . . . his mother, from Antonius Longus." In reading this letter, we cannot but be strongly reminded of the parable of the Prodigal Son. He too fell upon evil days in a

far country, and first came to repentance when he began to suffer destitution.

In addition to private letters, numerous other documents that serve to illustrate the daily life of those days have come to light. So, for instance, agreements with weavers and short-hand writers and other craftsmen have been found, giving us a glimpse of a class of society in which Christianity made many converts: of what we may call the working class. An apprenticeship agreement runs as follows:—

“Ischyryon, son of Heradion and . . . of Oxyrhynchus and Heracles son of Sarapio also called Leon . . . agree with each other as follows: . . . Thonis, a minor, to be taught the art of weaving for a period of five years . . . his stipulated period of work being every day from sunrise to sunset. . . . For the first two years and seven months. . . . Heracles shall pay nothing for the boy's wages, but for the remaining five months of the third year he shall pay him 12 drachmæ a month, for the fourth year, 16 drachmæ a month, and for the fifth year, 24 drachmæ.”

Heracles further agrees to provide his apprentice each year with a new tunic, to cost 16 drachmæ in the first year, and in the following years respectively 20, 24, and 28 drachmæ. The contract continues: “The boy shall have twenty holidays in the year on account of festivals, without any reduction from his wages, after the payment of wages begins.”

“Arrangements are finally made that if

through idleness or ill-health he exceed the number of holidays, an equal number of extra days beyond his apprenticeship shall be served.”¹ The articles date from the year 183 A.D.

A memorandum of articles of apprenticeship to a shorthand writer, in the year 155 A.D., runs as follows :

“Panechotes . . . to Apollonius, writer of shorthand, greeting. I have placed with you my slave Chærammon, to be taught the signs which your son Dionysius knows, for a period of two years . . . at the salary agreed upon between us, 120 silver drachmæ, not including feast-days ; of which sum you have received the first instalment, amounting to 40 drachmæ, and you will receive the second instalment (40 drachmæ) when the boy has learnt the whole system, and the third you will receive at the end of the period, when the boy writes fluently in every respect and reads faultlessly.”

In addition to letters and agreements, the documents found included reports from a physician, orders for arrest, complaints lodged with the police, tax registers, and invitations to weddings and dinners. These last-named attract our attention strongly, because they are, in many ways, so very similar to those now sent out. Here is, for instance, a dinner invitation : “Chæremon requests your company at dinner at the table of the Lord Serapis in the Serapeum, to-morrow, the 15th, at nine o’clock.” Another invitation runs : “Antonius, son of Ptolomæus, invites you

¹ Cobern, *op. cit.*, p. 56.

to dine with him at the table of the Lord Serapis in the house of Claudius Serapion, on the 16th at three o'clock." These examples illustrate the great similarity between our modern invitations and those issued centuries ago.

IV

THE WORSHIP OF CHRIST AND THE WORSHIP OF CÆSAR—LUKE II—THE NUMBER OF THE BEAST

WITH a subject like ours, it is impossible to arrange all the matter treated under methodically separated chapter-headings. All that can be done is to take the various results of the excavations that have a bearing on New Testament studies in some kind of logical sequence, so that at least some impression is conveyed of the mass of intensely interesting material that there is to be studied. What I am going to do now is to choose out a number of sayings and doings recorded in the New Testament, on which new light is thrown by the investigation of the papyri discovered in the excavations. These letters, invitations, bills, agreements, etc., have been quite inevitably the means of giving us all kinds of new information about the New Testament records.

Let us begin by returning for a moment to the dinner invitation quoted at the end of the previous chapter: "Antonius, son of Ptolemæus, invites you to dine with him at the table of the Lord Serapis in the house of Claudius Serapion, on the 16th at three o'clock."

What strikes us about this invitation is, first that a dinner appears at that time to have been a religious ceremony, and second that it was eaten at three o'clock. With regard to the dinner-hour, it is not at all improbable that dinners were given at three o'clock in Palestine at the time when Jesus lived. In Matthew xxii. we read the parable of the king who gave a marriage feast for his son. When all was ready, various servants were sent out "to summon the invited guests to the feast, but they would not come." The king sent servants out a second time, to remind his guests that all was ready, but one was going to his fields and another to his business. If anyone could, just before dinner, be going to his fields or his business, it was obviously still early and still light. Later in the story, when all kinds of people, "bad and good alike," had been brought in to enjoy the feast rejected by those for whom it had been prepared, the king enters the banqueting-hall, and sees a man who is not "dressed in a wedding-robe"; he has him bound by the servants and orders them to "throw him outside, out into the darkness." By this time, then, dusk must have fallen, for otherwise the darkness would not be mentioned. The feast must thus have begun some time before dusk.

Of much greater importance than the time at which dinner was eaten, is the fact that a meal was clearly, in ancient times, a religious observance.

During the last twenty or thirty years, much

research has been published on the question as to why the Roman Empire, particularly under the best of its Emperors, persecuted the Christians so often and so harshly. Mommsen, Keim, Boissier, Von Harnack, Wendland, and others¹ have done excellent work in this field. I cannot go fully into this question here, but I want to recall certain factors that influenced the Romans in their persecution of the Christians.

The Christians refused, for instance, to call God "Zeus," a refusal which was a foregone conclusion for a Christian, but could not but make an impression on the Romans of extraordinary obstinacy, for that was a period of the utmost mingling of religions, and they could not possibly realise why one could not just as well speak of God by the name of Zeus. Among the Christians, especially those of the first period, the idea of the end of the world was very strongly held. This was something totally incomprehensible by a Roman, for was not the "Imperium" eternal? Anyone who has read the passages in Augustine's *Civitas Dei* on this point, realises what a terribly disconcerting impression was made on the true Roman by the decline of the Roman Empire. What the Romans felt about the Christians was that they were lacking in the true love of their country, for in no other manner could their belief in the approaching end of the world be explained. In addition, Christianity was felt very generally to be somewhat "plebeian."

A writer like Celsus gives expression to the

¹ Cadoux in England.—Tr.

attitude towards Christians fairly general among Romans in and about the second century. They were regarded essentially as a plebeian group of peculiar danger to the State. It is true that Romans xiii. and the second chapter of the First Epistle of Peter speak with respect of the powers that be, but the New Testament also contains the thirteenth chapter of Revelation, and, in any case, a Roman could not imagine how respect for pagan authorities could be combined with the despising of pagan religion. To the Roman, State and religion were one and the same. Whosoever attacked religion also attacked the State. When Jesus said: "Give Cæsar what belongs to Cæsar, give God what belongs to God" (Mark xii. 17, Moffatt), in this juxtaposition of, or antithesis between God and the Emperor, a Roman discerned already an incipient attack on the basic principles of the Roman Empire. To the Romans, God and the Emperor became progressively more and more closely identified. To place them either side by side or in opposition meant a dissolution of the indissoluble bond between the State and religion. Moreover, to fill up the measure of iniquity, the gospel proclaimed the religion of a crucified Saviour, the most ridiculous idea that could be presented to a Roman. For to a Roman to serve was not to rule—to rule was to rule—and one who had died a slave's death on the cross, and had, like a slave, washed the feet of His disciples, could not possibly be given royal honours. To recognise service as the highest good would, in its logical

consequences, have dislocated the whole Roman civilisation, founded, as it essentially was, on slavery, and giving the ruler the highest place. We must certainly not forget, in this connection, that the preaching of the Cross of Christ in all ages, not least in the days of the Romans, has contained factors which in an unregenerate nature may arouse the most passionate enmity. At the foot of the Palatine at Rome, there has been found a tile, on which was engraved a crucified figure with an ass's head. Some soldier or other had scribbled under it the words: "Alexamenos [probably a Christian soldier] worships his God." The Cross has been at all times to the Jews a stumbling-block and to the Greeks foolishness.

The things that struck the Romans most, and most called forth their opposition, were the refusal of the Christians to take the oath by the "genius of the Emperor," which carried with it a declaration against military service, their detestation of the extremely popular gladiatorial combats, and their general tendency to live apart from the rest of their fellows. This applies also to social occasions and to dinners such as that to which the invitation already mentioned was issued. As has been pointed out, it appears from this invitation that a meal, in the world of the ancients, was a religious observance. A dinner might take place in a private house, but it was, nevertheless, a meal at the table of the god Serapis, a god who was venerated at that time throughout Egypt. The difficulties with which

the Christians of those days were faced can now be realised. If one accepted such an invitation, one was, as a Christian, immediately brought into conflict with one's belief. For the meal was not taken in honour of the Lord Jesus, but of the Lord Serapis! A Christian could not possibly sit down to such a meal. On their part, the non-Christians could see in such a refusal nothing but a proof of obstinacy. Why should a dinner not be eaten in honour of the Lord Serapis? The Romans accused the Christians of hating mankind (*odium generis humani*), and the Christians necessarily became unpopular in the communities in the midst of which they lived.

Whereas a single invitation to dinner can thus throw so strange a light on conditions in those days, the papyri as a whole have taught us a great deal regarding the significance of the New Testament use of the name Kurios, or "Lord," for Jesus.

As we know, Jesus Christ is constantly, in the New Testament, given the title of Lord. Something of the significance of this title was previously known, but the discoveries have made our knowledge very much more definite. The fact that an Emperor, from the time when his divinity was proclaimed—a practice that became more and more usual in the first century A.D.—was given the title of "God," "Son of God," "Lord," "Saviour of the World," throws an astonishing light upon the use of these names in connection with the person of Christ. Two conclusions, in particular, may be drawn from the

fact that the most primitive Christians gave to Jesus the title of Kurios.

In the first place, we may recall that the name of Kurios could be used for the Roman Emperor only after he had been proclaimed to be "divine." If, therefore, in the New Testament we find the writers speaking of the Lord Jesus (Kurios Jesus), then the deduction is inescapable that the primitive Christians considered Jesus worthy of divine homage; this is an opinion which, among the Jews, who abhorred nothing so much as the worship of false gods and the ascription of divinity to men, is absolutely inexplicable apart from the "mystery" of Christ (*cf.* 1 Cor. ii. 7). Paul was horrified when an attempt was made at Lystra to pay divine honours to Barnabas and himself (Acts xiv. 11). In the New Testament, even an angel is not regarded as fit to be worshipped (Rev. xix. 10; xxii. 9). Yet *all* the primitive Christians worshipped Christ: even those who had been in daily intercourse with Him, who had eaten with Him, talked with Him, slept beside Him. "No man is a hero to his valet." "Familiarity breeds," if not "contempt," discontent. Yet Jesus became to His closest comrades (who as Jews had a horror of polytheism, and who as human beings were probably readier to believe in depravity than in holiness) greater and greater as time went on. Very shortly after His death, we find that Stephen is praying to Jesus (Acts vii. 55, 58). The members of the Christian community are spoken of as those who call upon (or invoke) "the Name of the Lord"

(Acts ii. 21; ix. 14 and 21; xxii. 16 and 17; Rom. x. 12; 1 Cor. i. 2, etc.). Before the Lord's Supper the "church" at Corinth used to pray: "Maranatha!" (1 Cor. xvi. 22), which is: "Come, Lord," surely one of the very oldest expressions that come down to us from the early days of Christianity. Paul himself prayed to Jesus (2 Cor. xii. 8) to take away from him his physical sufferings. The whole of the first Christian movement called upon Jesus as Lord. This worship goes back to the most ancient history of the first Christian communities. At an early date, Pliny, Procurator of Bithynia, wrote to the Emperor Trajan that the Christians were wont to sing a hymn to Christ "as a god" (112 A.D.). Polycarp, as we learn from the "Martyrium Polycarpi" (xvii. 2), prayed to Jesus. At the time of Justin Martyr, the Jews opposed the Christians on the ground of their invocations of Jesus (*Dialogus cum Tryphone*). The Mohammedans turned against the Christians because of the divine honours paid by them to Christ. Every mosaic above the altars in the ancient basilicas in Rome, in Ravenna, and elsewhere is a witness of this worship. The whole of the mediæval Church sang the glory of Christ. Bach, in his church cantatas and chorales, brought to the German-speaking peoples songs of praise and worship in their own language. In our Protestant Churches to-day we sing hymns of praise to Jesus, in words such as: "Jesu, Lord of Glory," "Strong Son of God, Immortal Love," "My Lord, my Life, my Way, my End." The

"Kyrie eleison," the "Lord have mercy upon us," which is a prayer to Christ, is as old as Christianity itself. Whosoever removes this, not only attacks the history of Christendom, but strikes at the living heart of Christianity. And anyone who tries to interpret the rise of Christianity apart from this confession of faith, or who tries to interpret it out of its direct relation to the person of Jesus, retains in his historical reconstruction nothing but broken pieces. Jesus is *Kurios*—and none other.

So we arrive at our second conclusion. In the very ascription to Jesus by the early Christians of the title of Lord, there lay essentially a direct opposition to the Roman cult of Emperor-worship. Some of the excavated ostraca and papyri make mention of the Emperor Nero as "Lord," which carries the same implication as the mention of the same Emperor in inscriptions as "God." These various references in the ostraca and papyri to the Emperor Nero as "the Lord" have a very remarkable bearing on certain expressions used by the Apostle Paul. In 1 Cor. viii. 5 and 6, he writes: "For if so-called gods do exist either in Heaven or on earth—and in fact there are many such gods and many such lords—yet we have but one God, the Father, who is the source of all things, and for whose service we exist, and but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom we and all things exist" (Weymouth). It is possible that Paul had also other ideas in mind, but it seems to me incontestable that these words may be construed to

contain a strong opposition to the Roman Emperor-worship. In 1 Cor. xii. 3 Paul writes, that no one can testify that Jesus Christ is the Lord, "except in the Holy Spirit." Finally there are the familiar words in the Epistle to the Philippians: "Therefore God raised him high and conferred on him a Name above all names, so that before the Name of Jesus every knee should bend in heaven, on earth, and underneath the earth, and every tongue confess that 'Jesus Christ is Lord,' to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. ii. 9-11, Moffatt). Jesus Christ is Lord: not the Emperor. Whereas a second-century inscription has been found in Rome which calls the Emperor "Great God and Saviour," in the Epistle to Titus Jesus is described in the very same words (Titus ii. 13; also cf. 2 Peter i. 1 in Moffatt's translation). So we find over and over again the clash with the worship of the Emperor expressed in a remarkable manner in various passages in the Epistles of Paul and elsewhere.

I cannot linger to deal with the many other cognate matters, such as, for instance, the use of the word Kurios in the Greek translation of the Old Testament as the name of God.¹ One point that cannot be passed by is the expression used by Paul, "the table of the Lord," in connection with the Lord's Supper (1 Cor. x. 21), which may

¹ It may also be recalled that the noun Kurios was part of the regular vocabulary in the cults of the Hellenistic salvation and mystery religions. Further, there were in the second century A.D. itinerant Hellenistic preachers or "prophets," who announced themselves as "saviours," and claimed divine honours for themselves. See Bibliography.

be compared with the reference in the invitation to dinner already discussed to "the table of the Lord Serapis." This clash of ideas must surely again in this instance be assumed.

From the word *Kurios* another word *Kuriakos* was formed, an adjective, meaning "belonging to the Lord." This is the adjective used in such phrases as "the day of the Lord," which expression may be regarded as in contradistinction to a day of the Emperor (*i.e.* the birthday), but which was apparently used by the early Christians to denote the first day in the week, our Sunday (Rev. i. 10). By an exactly similar derivation, "Christian" implied a slave or soldier in the service of the heavenly Christ, in contradistinction to the "Cæsarian," the slave or soldier of the Emperor, the Cæsar.

Of perhaps even greater interest than what the recent discoveries have taught us about the relation between the worship of Christ and that of the Emperor, is the new and surprising light that some of the discoveries have thrown on the beginning of the second chapter of the Gospel according to Luke.

The wording of these familiar verses in Moffatt's translation is as follows: "Now in those days an edict was issued by Cæsar Augustus for a census of the whole world. (This was the first census, and it took place when Quirinius was governor of Syria.) So everyone went to be registered, each at his own town, and as Joseph belonged to the house and family of David, he went up from Galilee to Judea, from

the town of Nazaret to David's town called Bethlehem, to be registered along with Mary his wife" (Moffatt).

If we consult the literature of New Testament critical study of about twenty or thirty years ago, we are struck by the fact that almost all the writers raise three great objections against the veracity of Luke's record. It was considered that the first part of Luke ii. was full of inaccuracies. In the first place, so it was said, there was no mention elsewhere of the taking of such a census, so that the correctness of Luke's information was here questionable. In the second place, it was regarded as very improbable that, as a prelude to such a census (supposing it to be a historical fact), anyone would be required to return to his native town or village for registration purposes. Why could not Joseph make his census return at Nazareth, and why was he obliged to undertake the long and troublesome journey to Bethlehem? Finally, no confirmation could be obtained of the statement as to Quirinius (A.V., Cyrenius) being at that time Governor of Syria. Altogether, verses 1 to 6 of this chapter were under suspicion.

Recent research has put a speedy and unexpected end to the generally critical attitude towards this passage.

In the first place, it has been shown by the excavations that at any rate in the first century A.D. there really was a general census every fourteen years. A number of forms for census returns have been found, so that it can now be

stated with a large degree of probability what sort of census return would have been filled up by Joseph in Bethlehem. The wording of these returns is very much as follows: "In the year such-and-such of the Emperor so-and-so (with the full titles of the Emperor), I, A. B., son of C. D., aged x years, with a straight nose, black hair, scar on my shin, enroll myself, together with E. F., my wife, aged y years"¹ (name and description of all persons registered); then followed a statement of effects: so many sheep, camels, situation of house, etc.

Another return runs as follows:

"To Dorion strategus and . . . royal scribe and Didymus . . . topogrammateis and komogrammateis, from Thermoutarion the daughter of Thoonis with her guardian Apollonius, the son of Sotades. There are living in the house which belongs to me in the South Lane . . . Thermoutarion, a freedwoman of the above-mentioned Sotades, about 65 years of age, of medium height, dark-complexioned, long-visaged, a scar on the right knee. Total three persons. I, the above-mentioned Thermoutarion, along with my guardian, the said Apollonius, swear by Tiberius Claudius Cæsar Augustus Germanicus the Emperor that assuredly the preceding document makes a sound and true report of those living with me, and that there is no one else living with me, neither a stranger nor an Alexandrian citizen, nor a freedman nor a Roman citizen, nor an Egyptian, in addition to the afore-

¹ See Moulton, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

said. If I am swearing truly, may it be well with me, but if falsely, the reverse. In the ninth year of Tiberius Claudius Cæsar Augustus Germanicus Emperor, Phaophi. . . .”¹

The second objection entertained against Luke’s record was, as we have seen, that it was quite superfluous and improbable for Joseph to have had to travel from Nazareth to Bethlehem on account of a census. But this second objection has also been proved to be groundless. For it has been found that an edict was actually issued in the year 104 A.D., by the then Governor of Egypt, G. Vibius Maximus, as follows :

“Gaius Vibius Maximus, Præfect of Egypt, saith :

“The enrollment by household being at hand, it is necessary to notify all who for any cause whatsoever are outside their ‘nomes’ to return to their domestic hearths, that they may also accomplish the customary dispensation of enrollment and continue steadfastly in the husbandry that belongeth to them.”²

In the light of this edict, one need not be disturbed at the announcement that Joseph had to betake himself to Bethlehem, where both he and Mary had been born.

The third objection, that Quirinius (or Cyrenius, as the Authorised Version calls him) was not at that time Governor of Syria, now also appears to be unfounded. Formerly the historical information available only showed that Quirinius

¹ See Milligan, *Here and There, etc.*, p. 88.

² Moulton, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

was governor during the census of 6 A.D., *i.e.* at the time of the second and not during the first census. As far back as 1898 Sir William M. Ramsay tried to solve the problem by the hypothesis that Quirinius was in Syria at the time in some military or other capacity, perhaps connected with the census, and that Luke's inaccuracy lay in calling him "governor." But since 1898 the situation has been altered. During the excavations in the holy place of Men Askænos in Antioch in Pisidia, Ramsay found an inscription from which it appeared that Quirinius held office before the term reported by Flavius Josephus. In that way he would also have been governor at the time of the census recorded in Luke's Gospel, at the time of the birth of Jesus.

As a pendant to the above remarkable information concerning the Nativity records in Luke ii., it may be added that we can now say with a higher degree of probability in what year Jesus was born and how long His earthly life lasted. As already mentioned, it has been found that in Egypt at the same period a census was taken every fourteen years. Now in view of the uniformity of the Roman rule, no difficulty can be raised against the supposition that a similar procedure obtained in Palestine. Census papers have been found from the year 34 A.D., and some which appear to belong to the year 20 A.D., *i.e.* fourteen years earlier. In any case a census was taken in the year 6 A.D., *i.e.* another fourteen years earlier. This is the census referred to in Acts v. 37: "Judas the Galilean started up at

the time of the census, and got people to desert to him ; but he perished too, and all his followers were scattered.” Now we know that Herod the Great reigned from 37-4 B.C., and that Jesus was born during his reign. In any case, therefore, Jesus was born before the date from which the Christian calendar is reckoned. It has been realised for a long time that our chronology was not quite correct. If we now reckon back fourteen years from A.D. 6—since there appears to have been a census every fourteen years—then we get as the year in which the birth of Jesus presumably took place, 8 B.C. Supposing that Herod might have been somewhat dilatory with the census, then Jesus might have been born as late as 7 or 6 B.C.

We gain from these calculations a little further knowledge as to the age to which Jesus lived. It is not possible here to enter into the extremely thorny question of the chronology of the Passion stories as given in the first three Gospels, on the one hand, and in that of John on the other. Taking the account by the Synoptists as the most acceptable, Jesus most probably died on Friday, the 7th April, in the year 30 A.D. If we accept the Gospel of John, with the fourteenth Nizan as the day of the Crucifixion, then it must have taken place on Friday, the 3rd April, in the year 33 A.D. If Jesus was born in 8, 7, or 6 B.C., He was about forty at the time of His death. This fits in very well with what is said by the Jews, according to John viii. 57: “Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast *thou* seen Abraham?”

We also read in one of the works of Irenæus, one of the Fathers of the Church, who often had good sources of information at his command, that Jesus lived to the age of forty to fifty years. A series of connecting links can be shown between Irenæus and the writer of the fourth Gospel, and we may assume that both had access to good sources of information. If Jesus lived to be forty years old or more, then Mary could not have been at all young at the time of His death. Joseph was already dead. Mary must have been by that time about sixty years of age, so that all the pictures that represent her at the foot of the Cross in the guise of a young woman are contrary to reality. Mary probably lived for some time with John, possibly also for a while with James, the brother of Jesus, and most probably died at Jerusalem.

Of no less interest is the further knowledge that the new discoveries have given us of certain matters relating to the ancient system of numerical notation and some of its uses.

On this point Moulton has written some interesting comments.¹ As we know, the Greeks did not use numerals, as we do, these having been learnt from the Arabians, but made use of letters in order to record numbers. They had four series of letters : the first nine letters of the alphabet, Alpha, Beta, Gamma, Delta, etc., served for the units up to nine ; the tenth to the eighteenth represented ten, twenty, etc., up to ninety, the following nine gave them 100 to 900.

¹ *From Egyptian Rubbish Heaps*, p. 31.

For the 1000 to 9000 they took the first nine letters over again, a little point on the end of the letter indicating that it stood for so many thousand. Moulton says: "You see that any sum up to 9999 could be represented in Greek letters. But that was not getting very far. So in order to get further they would write a very big M, and in the top angle of the M they repeated the symbols used before. . . . By that notation the old Greeks could represent any number up to 99,999,999. Now, if we add *one* to 99,999,999 we get 100,000,000, otherwise 'ten thousand times ten thousand,' which you will remember in the Book of the Revelation, where it describes a 'multitude which no man can number.' It is one beyond the biggest sum that can be represented by the Greek notation." Now we see this expression in its proper historical setting. So far no man could number. There were no more letters left.

This leads us on to the consideration of another familiar passage in the Revelation of John, chap. xiii. verse 18: "Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred and sixty-six."

Those who have had the chance of visiting Pompeii know that numbers of small rough inscriptions—what the archæologists call "graffiti"—are to be found on the walls of the houses, which illustrate in a marvellous manner the daily life in Pompeii before the eruption of Vesuvius. Here is one of them: "I love her, the number

of whose honourable name is five hundred and forty-seven." Now, since the letters of the Greek alphabet all had numerical values, a name could be hinted at by giving the sum of its letters. Moulton gives a "reconstruction" on these lines.¹ Take, as a simple illustration, the name "Ada." $A=1$, $D=4$, $A=1$. Total, 6. If a Roman youth of the time of the Emperor Nero were in love with a girl to whom we may, for the nonce, give our name of Ada, and if he were impelled to give expression in some way or other to his feelings towards her, then he scribbled in a prominent place on a wall: "I love her, the number of whose honourable name is 6." Should Ada pass by the place where this inscription was written, all she needed to do was to reckon up the letters of her name in numbers, and she soon knew in which quarter the wind sat, and also, perhaps, on whose roof was the weathercock.

From the number of the charming young lady, we turn back to the number of the Beast, in Revelation xiii. 18: "Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast; for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred and sixty-six." The oldest reading is probably not 666, but 616. Many efforts have been made, particularly of late years, to arrive at an explanation. The most plausible is that of Adolf Deissmann,² who considers that the riddle is best solved by re-

¹ Moulton, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

² Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East*, pp. 275-77.

membering that the letters of the Greek words "Kaisar Theos" added together produce the total 616. The words "Kaisar Theos" mean "The Emperor is God," and, in the light of what has already been said about the Christian opposition to the cult of the Emperor, the meaning becomes perfectly clear. The Romans said: "The Emperor is God." The Christians made the counter-assertion, "Christ is God." These two contrasted statements sum up in brief the whole conflict between Christianity and the Roman Empire.

At a later date the number 616 was altered to 666. Deissmann supposes the number 666 to be a caricature of the name Jesus. The sum of the Greek letters of the name Jesus is 888. Now we know that seven was the sacred number of the ancients. 3 times 7=thrice holy. Jesus=888=more than thrice holy. 666 is three times one less than thrice holy, and thus a caricature of 888. To the writer of Revelation, Jesus is all in all. He is God. The Emperor is the direct opposite. He is "the Beast."

V

FRESH LIGHT ON VARIOUS TEXTS—THE LITERARY QUALITY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT WRITINGS— FORM AND CONTENT OF ANCIENT LETTERS AND BOOKS

THE examples given in the preceding chapter have shown clearly what great importance must be attributed to the recent excavations as leading to a better understanding of the New Testament. But in addition to the passages quoted, there are very many more on which they throw a new and wonderful light. Because of the character of the material, it is not possible to deal with it in a regular order, according to the passages illustrated. I am simply choosing out a few of the many examples in arbitrary succession.

There is a well-known saying of Jesus in Matthew vi., verses 1 *et seq.*, regarding alms-giving, prayer, and fasting. Jesus here says about prayer: "Also, when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites, for they like to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street-corners, so as to be seen by men; I tell you truly they do get their reward" (Matt. vi. 5, see also verses 2-16). In the Greek the verb used in the phrase "get their reward" is *apecho*, which appears in the papyri

as a technical expression regularly employed in drawing up a receipt, with the sense "to receive in full." If it be now taken in this sense in Matthew, Jesus is found to be saying: The Pharisees pray at length at the corners of the streets, so that people may notice them. They are praying in order to attract notice. Just so, people do look at them. Therefore a receipt in full is given to them. In this saying of Jesus lies a strong element of irony.

In Matthew vi. 24 *et seq.*, Jesus is speaking about not worrying. There we find another well-known saying that is translated in all our versions to a similar effect: "Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit to his stature?" Now there is a word which occurs in Mark xv. 40, as a description of a person, "James the Less" (A.V.), but "the Younger" in Moffatt's version, for it has transpired from the study of the papyri that the word *mikros* there always refers to age and not to size. The same is true of *belikian* (stature), so Matt. vi. 27 probably means that nobody can add the smallest amount to the length of his life by worrying about it. This interpretation fits in much better with the context than that which represents Jesus as thinking of an increase in height.

The charge to the Twelve Apostles in Matthew x. gives, as one of the injunctions of Jesus, to have no fear of those who kill the body, but cannot kill the soul, and rather to fear him who can destroy both soul and body in Gehenna. Then follows the question: "Are not two sparrows

sold for a farthing?" (verse 29). In Luke xii. 6 we find a similar question: "Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings?"

The papyri and other discoveries have enabled us to find out more about the price of sparrows. In the two sayings quoted, the prices do not quite agree, but perhaps there was a reduction for quantity. It certainly appears that sparrows were a very cheap commodity, and much eaten by humbler folk. They were probably sold on the market in pairs or five together. In Jesus' day the price for a pair was 1 *as*—about a halfpenny, and for five a little more than a penny. This information is confirmed by the "Maximum Tariff" issued by the Emperor Diocletian towards the end of the third century, which has been the subject of so much discussion by scholars. Some of the provisions of the schedule were known from inscriptions, but in 1899 another fragment was discovered, on which is actually stated the highest price that might be charged for sparrows. At that date sparrows were the cheapest of all the edible birds. They were sold by tens, and the price for ten was then about 3d. From the saying of Jesus it appears that five sparrows, in His day, cost rather more than a penny, so ten would be nearly 2½d. It is quite comprehensible that more than two centuries later the price should have risen a little. What is more important for us, however, is to note how closely Christ portrays the life of His time. We are struck in general with the fact, not only how vividly Jesus sees things round about Him, but also, and particularly,

of His love of Nature. With Paul we do not find this same living sympathy with Nature. Paul could write, in 1 Cor. ix. 9: "Doth God care for oxen?" Deissmann¹ makes the humorous but pointed comment that nobody brought up in the country could say such a thing. Paul was a town lad, from Tarsus in Cilicia. Jesus grew up in the village of Nazareth, and was in close contact with peasants, who live with animals and feel for them.

When Jesus sent out "the twelve" He commanded them to "take nothing for their journey, save a staff only" (A.V.), "no bread, no bag for alms, no money in the belt, to be shod with sandals, but not to put on a double set of underwear" (new translation) (Mark vi. 8 *et seq.*). The missionaries must only take bare necessities with them on their journey. Neither bread nor money were reckoned as such. But Jesus also forbids them to carry a *pēra* and this word means neither a travelling-bag nor a food-bag, but a beggar's wallet for alms. In the days of Jesus itinerant religious teachers often carried such bags for alms, in which they stored such gifts as they received. This is expressly forbidden by Christ to His disciples. He wants them to go out as laymen, not wearing any special dress, nor yet as beggars, but still dependent for their means of life on those who accepted the Word.

In John xi. 16, where mention is made of Thomas, there is added to his name the identifica-

¹ See Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East*, pp. 273-75.

tion "called Didymus." Didymus is equivalent to "the Twin." This name was sometimes given to boys in connection with Castor and Pollux, the patrons of pagan fisher-folk, in the first century of the Christian era.

We read in John xii. 6 about Judas Iscariot: "Not that he cared for the poor; he said this because he was a thief, and because he carried the money-box and pilfered what was put in" (Moffatt). The A.V. translation was: "he had the bag and bare what was put therein." That translation is incorrect. The word does not mean "he carried" but "he took away."

In Moffatt's translation of Acts xvii. 22 we read: "So Paul stood in the middle of the Areopagus and said, Men of Athens, I observe at every turn that you are a most religious people."¹ The translators of the Authorised Version rendered this remark as "very superstitious." But the word that is used here means, according to Deissmann, "religious" and not "superstitious."

In 1 Cor. vi. 9 and 10 we read: "Make no mistake about it; neither the immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor catamites nor sodomites nor thieves nor the lustful nor the drunken nor the abusive nor robbers will inherit the Realm of God" (Moffatt). It is well known that whole series of ethical concepts are to be found summarised in the tables of vices and virtues of

¹ The actual rendering of the phrase as given in Dutch by the author would be "people who have a great regard for the unseen world."—*Tr.*

primitive Christianity. We already knew that they had been drawn up in relation to Jewish and Gentile tables. But until lately a rather one-sided method of search had been made for the latter in philosophic literature. Of much greater importance in relation to the primitive Christian tables are surely the popular series of vices and virtues. In various museums there can be seen counters belonging to an ancient form of the game of chequers or draughts. These draughtsmen bear on the one side a number, but on the other side there are often to be found the popular names for vices or virtues. The parallels with the list of vices and virtues, as given in such passages as 1 Cor. vi. 9 and 10, strike one immediately. The list of evil-doers given by Paul in these two verses can be discovered word for word in the set of "vices" given on the draughtsmen of this old game.

Paul writes in 1 Cor. vi. 20, and in 1 Cor. vii. 23, to the Corinthians: "Ye are bought and paid for." The English versions are: "Ye are bought with (or for) a price." What Paul is trying to express here belongs to a whole train of thought with which we are constantly meeting in his letters, and which cannot be thoroughly explained without some closer knowledge of the common law of Hellenistic civilisation. For Paul is constantly using the metaphor of being redeemed by purchase through Christ from the slavery of sin, of the Law or of false gods, and this train of thought is certainly coloured in his own mind by the technical formulæ and the customs connected

with the ceremonial manumission or freeing of slaves, so familiar to his readers in ancient times. The inscriptions at Delphi have given us a glimpse of the ceremony of freeing a slave as accomplished there, but such manumission was by no means confined to Delphi, but was common to all Greek antiquity, and entered into Jewish and Christian experience. In the days of the Empire there was, among the various recognised forms in which a slave could obtain his freedom, that of the "fictitious¹ purchase of a slave by a divinity. The owner comes with the slave to the temple, sells him there to the god, and receives the purchase money from the temple treasury, the slave having previously paid it in there out of his savings. The slave is now the property of the god; not, however, a slave of the temple, but the protégé of the god." In relation "to his former master, he is a completely free man." A written record would be made of the proceedings, mostly in such a form as this: "N. N. sold to the Pythian Apollo a male slave named X. Y. at the price of so many minæ, for freedom," or "on condition that he shall be free," etc. The document was dated at its head, and closed with the names of the witnesses.

Paul is alluding to this ancient custom of the ceremonial freeing of slaves whenever he speaks of our being made free through Christ. He is constantly using the word "slave." All men are slaves to sin. Moreover, the Jew is a slave to the Law and the Gentile to his gods. Now the

¹ See Deissmann, *op. cit.*, 319-30.

man who is slave to sin, to the Law, or to the gods can be purchased by Christ. That has happened to the Christian. Hence Paul writes : "Ye are bought and paid for" (1 Cor. vi. 20 and vii. 23). Similarly, Paul writes in his Epistle to the Galatians, in chapter v. verse 1, of "the freedom for which Christ has set us free," and says in verse 17: "Brothers, you were called to be free" (both Moffatt's translation). Paul is even using here the very same words that we find in the memorandum of ceremonial manumission of a slave. In many such documents it is expressly forbidden that the freed slave should be brought into slavery again. Paul gives a warning against those who want to make the Christians slaves once more (Gal. ii. 4), and he writes : "You must not turn slaves to any man" (1 Cor. vii. 23) (Moffatt). Those who had been "bought" by Christ were the slaves of Christ, and as such simultaneously free. But he who is in the outward the slave of a human master, is still a freedman of Christ. Even the word that Paul uses for redemption, "buying-free," is a word that belongs to the vocabulary of this realm of facts and ideas.

When one bears in mind all that has been said about the ceremonial freeing of slaves, it will be clear that Paul could hardly have expressed himself more distinctly to a congregation such as that at Corinth, comprising, as it did, so many slaves. The Lord Christ gave to His own freedom from slavery to sin, to the Law ; and the price which was paid for it was not the money which the slave

himself had saved up with so much pains, but a life of complete self-surrender. And at the same time we may conclude from these considerations how careful we must be in the interpretation of the New Testament, particularly when we approach those great themes of redemption and of reconciliation, atonement, we are only too apt to read into the letters of Paul all kinds of subsequent ecclesiastical theories, whereas the real meaning of the apostle often lies in a contrary direction, and is, in any case, most likely really to be explained in the light of contemporary conditions.

In Galatians iii. 24 we read : " So that the law is become our guardian,¹ to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith." The meaning of the word *paidagogos* (the English Authorised Version has "school-master," the Dutch "disciplinarian") was already partly known, but yet further light has been thrown on it by some of the papyri. The "guardian" or "school-master" of our translations was not the head of a school, at most he was an under-master, but the word is most often used to denote a person of no more importance than a trusted slave, whose duty it was to conduct his master's sons to and from school, so that no harm should befall them on the way. When Paul says here that the Law is a pedagogue, and has to lead us to Christ, then he is thinking of Christ as the real Teacher, while the

¹ The author's word here is literally caretaker, or one who watches over. The nearest word to the original meaning is the Anglo-Indian child's "bearer."—*Tr.*

Law is only the trusted servant of the Father, and its task that of bringing the world to Christ.

In Galatians vi. 17 we find Paul writing: "For the rest let nobody trouble me, for I bear in my body the scars of the Lord Jesus." Paul uses here the word *stigmata*, and is probably alluding to some custom in the world of his time, whereby servants of a temple were branded with the sacred token and thus placed under the protection of the god. When a slave was sold to the temple, and thus freed from his former master, the token was branded on him. Deissmann thinks, however, that we must regard this as an allusion to the practice of wearing an amulet connected with one or other of the gods, as a talisman against any trouble that might be caused by an adversary. In a similar way Paul knew himself to be protected against such attacks, because he wore on his body the protective marks of Christ. For this explanation Deissmann relies on a third-century papyrus in the Museum at Leyden.

In Philippians iii. 8 we read: "But for Christ's sake I have learned to count my former gains a loss; indeed I count anything a loss, compared to the supreme value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord" (Moffatt). Paul has just been recounting all his privileges and expectations, from his youth upwards, and now he declares that he regards them all as a "loss" for Christ's sake. The word used here in the Greek is applied in a papyrus to the bones that have been thrown out into the street for the dogs.

The first verse of Hebrews xi. reads: "Now faith is a definite assurance of what is hoped for, a convincing proof of things not seen" (new translation). The word here translated "a definite assurance" is in the Greek *hypostasis* (the A.V. translated it "substance"). Grenfell and Hunt have shown that the word *hypostasis* was a technical term in legal affairs, and meant "title-deeds." Moulton makes the following comment on this discovery ¹ :—

"When anybody bought a piece of land, there were always some papers connected with it." These "were carefully collected in a docket and then put into the public Archives Office. Each large town had a special keeper of the archives to look after the papers and produce them when demanded."

So when the writer of Hebrews calls faith *title-deeds*, the train of thought he wants to call up can best be given in our day as follows :

"Suppose I go to a real estate agent and buy a piece of land in Canada. I have not time to go and see it; but if I buy that land I have certain papers put into my hand, title-deeds of that property. I take these home with me, and if ever I want to realise on that land I can go to an office and say: 'I have some land to sell. Here are the title-deeds.' . . . That paper is accepted as being the equivalent of the land."

What my title-deeds are in the case of the piece of land in Canada, faith is, in Hebrews xi. 1. Those who believe have received from God a

¹ Moulton, *From Egyptian Rubbish Heaps*," p. 28.

promise concerning something that has not yet been seen. "God's promise, and faith in it, is the title-deeds, the hypostasis." Those who believed in God's promise "were so sure of it . . . that they acted upon the belief, treated it as their estate, as something absolutely theirs." To the readers of the Epistle this train of thought would assuredly be perfectly simple. How apt we are to reduce such sayings as that in Hebrews xi. 1 to mere abstractions !

Before I bring to an end this necessarily brief and incomplete survey of the light thrown on certain passages of the New Testament by archæological research, I want to say a few words about two more points : the New Testament use of the word "brother," and the idea of a "parousia." To begin with the word "brother," so constantly met with in the Epistles, it has been found that this name, *adelphos*, which was given to a member of the Christian community, was also the name used for the members of the Serapeum at Memphis, and of other religious fellowships of the first century A.D. Of greater importance is the new knowledge obtained from these researches of the ideas behind the word "parousia," used in the Gospels for Christ's second coming. This word was found, in the light of the Egyptian papyri of the second and third centuries B.C., to have a peculiar meaning. After the reign of Alexander the Great, the Ptolemies were Kings of Egypt, and they were not, generally speaking, particularly popular. Moulton says ¹ :

¹ Moulton, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

“When they came to the distant parts of the country there were appropriate manifestations of enthusiasm, but it was all worked up beforehand.”

A “free-will offering” was arranged for by the officials on the spot, and the people had to produce the money. The arrival of one of the Ptolemies was called a “parousia”=a coming; the word came to have the meaning of a royal visit, and so spontaneously came into use as the description of the coming of the King Jesus.

One of the most important things we have gained from the recent discoveries is the ability to form a more correct judgment as to the quality of the Greek of the various New Testament writers, and as to the literary quality of these writings in general. As we have seen, the New Testament is, for the greater part, written in the vernacular language of the period, the *Koinē*. That does not mean, however, that there are no shades of difference. It might perhaps be better to say that in the Gospels the spoken language becomes literature, and so takes on a new dignity, but even then shades of difference remain. For instance, the writers that show the least signs of acquaintance with Greek culture are those of the Gospel according to Mark and of the Revelation of John. From the standpoint of Greek culture, Mark's Gospel takes the lowest place of all the New Testament writings. It may be said that this Gospel has most in common with those of the papyri which show evidence of a lesser degree of refinement and education. In this case we must not forget that the Gospel according to Mark is

based on Aramaic sources, which have had their influence on the text, but the fact nevertheless remains that Mark, in his use of the Greek language, is the least literary among the New Testament writers. Like Mark, the writer of the Revelation of John makes occasional mistakes in his Greek, particularly in the first chapter. The writer of these visions is able to express himself in Greek with great fluency, but it is clear, all the same, that he has not complete mastery of the language. It is not his native tongue.

The language of the Gospel according to Matthew is superior to that of the Second Gospel. This might be concluded from the way that "Matthew" here and there endeavours to improve the diction and style of those portions of Mark's Gospel which he incorporates in his own text. Matthew writes Hellenistic Greek of the ordinary type. The Gospel and Epistles of John, the Epistles of James and Jude, and the First Epistle of Peter stand, in respect of their language, on about the same level as the Gospel according to Matthew. These writers spoke Aramaic, but they were accustomed to write in Greek. There are other New Testament writers to whom Greek was their native language, although some of them, like Paul, had a knowledge of Aramaic. In this category Moulton and Deissmann place, in addition to Paul, Luke and the writers of the Epistles to the Hebrews and of 2 Peter. In regard to Luke, I should like to mention in passing that he is evidently a highly educated man, whose language is, on the whole,

that of the upper classes. His style approximates to that of Matthew's Gospel, the Johannine writings, and the Epistles of James, Jude, and 1 Peter, whenever he is dealing with events in Palestine and is being influenced by his sources, as, for instance, in the early chapters of the Acts of the Apostles. Where he is, on the other hand, describing the great missionary journeys of Paul in Asia Minor or Greece, he returns to his own more cosmopolitan Greek. It is also interesting to note how he, even more than Matthew, improves the wording and style of the passages from Mark which he has included in his own Gospel.

The Epistle to the Hebrews and the Second Epistle of Peter are on a rather different level. They approach more nearly to the literary style of the Atticists, and one finds in them none of those grammatical errors that are to be met with even in Luke's writings and also in those of Paul. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, in particular, is, in diction and style, superior to the other New Testament writers. This book was written by somebody who, although he evidently knew no Hebrew and used only the Greek translation of the Old Testament, was in mind and thought a Semite. His vocabulary and style are less like the ordinary *Koinē* than those of any of the other New Testament writings. Of the eighty-seven words which occur in the Greek translation of the Old Testament and in only this Epistle among the writings of the New Testament, seventy-four belong to the vocabulary of the old literary writings and only thirteen to the vernacular.

The Greek of the Second Epistle of Peter is stilted, and one gets the impression that it has been learnt from books.

Paul's Greek is at all events not that of the Atticists; it is the ordinary contemporary language of everyday life. We must, however, never forget that Paul used to dictate his letters. Romans xvi. 22 tells us the name of the man who wrote this letter down: "I, Tertius, who write the letter, salute you in the Lord" (Moffatt). Not infrequently the person who dictated a letter wrote his own signature and added a postscript in his own writing. This is what Paul did in his First Epistle to the Corinthians, where he says in chapter xvi. 21: "I, Paul, write this salutation with my own hand," and in his letter to the Colossians (iv. 18), "This salutation is in my own hand, from Paul. 'Remember I am in prison. Grace be with you.' " Obviously Paul's practice of dictating his letters must have influenced the style of these. He sometimes makes very long sentences (*cf.* Romans ii.). He frequently goes off at a tangent. His letters are often more like speeches than like treatises. Here and there, however, he rises to great heights: think of Romans viii. and 1 Corinthians xiii. Romans and Ephesians, in particular, display here and there an almost classic perfection. One must therefore be careful not to look upon Paul too much as the tentmaker, cut off from the culture of his time. Deissmann has, perhaps, sometimes gone too far in this direction. Paul is rather a man who thinks in Greek, and this Greek in the *Koinē* of an

unusually gifted and well-educated man, in touch with contemporary Greek culture. In his spiritual outlook, however, Paul always remained heart and soul a Jew.

Another matter of considerable importance in helping us to understand primitive Christian conditions is the comparatively certain knowledge we now have as to the appearance of the early Christian writings and as to the materials on and with which they were written.¹ Recent studies regarding the first centuries of the Christian era have shown us not only that a great deal of travelling was done in those days (which explains the rapidity with which various persons whose names are familiar to us in the Epistles change their addresses) but also that they did a great deal of writing. In the days of Jesus, the habit of writing was very widespread among all classes of the population. This makes it very probable that the earliest written notes of the deeds done or words spoken by Jesus date from His actual lifetime, or from the years immediately following His death and resurrection. As these researches proceed, it will become progressively clear that our knowledge of the life of Jesus is based on excellent historical data. The reason why this is not already realised is that certain theories advanced in the days before this knowledge was obtained have not yet been set aside, and that the critical study of these data has not yet proceeded far enough. A certain amount of patience is needed.

¹ For an account of the earliest copies of the New Testament writings *known to exist*, see pages 129-135.—Tr.

What did the earliest records of the life of Jesus look like? Cobern,¹ following Kennedy, says :

“ They were written on papyrus sheets which ordinarily measured five by twelve inches, with twenty sheets usually to the roll, the columns being generally two or three inches wide with small margins. Mark’s Gospel would make a roll about nineteen feet long and Romans eleven-and-one-half feet ; while 2 Thessalonians could be written in a five-column roll fifteen inches in length. They were written with a reed pen (3 John 13), with an ink made out of soot and gum.” “ The roll was bound with a thread and sealed ” (Rev. v. 1).

Various parallels may now be traced between the “ Epistles ” written by Paul and the letters found among the papyri. The correspondence is by no means confined to externals, there being great similarity in the structure of the letter, the style, and turns of expression. To bring this likeness home, I will give a specimen letter from a mother to her children, which was found in the Fayum district, and dates from the end of the second or the beginning of the third century A.D.

“ Serapais to her children Ptolemaius and Apollinaria and Ptolemaius, with many greetings. First and foremost I pray for your good health, which I deem of all things the most essential. I join in worship before my God Serapis, praying that I may hear that you are well, even as I pray for your general welfare. I rejoiced when I received your letter telling me that you were well

¹ Cobern, *op. cit.*, p. 99.

recovered. Salute Ammonous with his wife and children and also those that love you. Cyrilla saluteth you and Hermias the daughter of Hermias, Hermanoubis the nurse, Athenais . . . Cyrilla, Casia . . . Empis, in fact all who are here. Answer therefore my inquiry regarding yourself, what you are about, for you know that if I receive tidings of you I rejoice in your well-being. I pray that you may prosper."

Maurice Jones, who quotes this letter in his *The New Testament in the Twentieth Century*, says: "A mere glance at this letter reveals many features of it as in common with Paul's letters. It contains an address, a prayer, a rejoicing, a request, and closes with the usual salutations, all of which corresponds closely with the plan and contents of the normal apostolic letter. The very phrases . . . remind us strongly of similar expressions . . . on the part of St Paul, as, *e.g.*, Eph. i. 16; Col. i. 9; 2 Cor. vii. 7; Phil. ii. 20, and Philem. 7."

Another point that deserves mention is this, that differences in style and language do not necessarily always indicate difference in authorship. The letters were, remember, dictated, and the amanuensis had in some cases more, in some cases less freedom of action. A letter might be written from condensed notes, from complete shorthand notes, or be taken down in longhand, word for word. This matter is of importance in connection with the question of the relation between the Epistle to the Colossians and that to the Ephesians. Did Paul write the Epistle to the Ephesians? Its genuine Pauline character has

been called in question. It is not written in his usual style. Further, there are in the Epistle to the Ephesians very clear traces of translation from a Semitic language—so strong that the translations are not really Greek. (Scholars call these “Semitisms.”) Nevertheless Moulton¹ thinks it perfectly possible that the Epistle is Pauline. His idea is that Paul wrote the Epistle to the Colossians himself, in view of the special conditions there, but gave a general outline of a similar message to some one else (perhaps Timothy) to produce a more general Epistle for circulation to several churches. Timothy was not so thoroughly “hellenised” as Paul, and knew his Bible in Hebrew (2 Tim. iii. 15).

In this connection, Moulton makes reference to two letters discovered during the excavations, written on the same day by two different persons, but showing great similarity. The first letter is from a woman to her husband, Hephæstion, and the second from her brother to Hephæstion. In both letters we find similar phrasing and a remarkable correspondence in the sequence of ideas. Moulton suggests that the “wife and brother-in-law had been having a conversation, in which they have made up together the pleas they will urge in separate letters,” written independently a few hours later. An explanation might be made on these lines of both the points of agreement and the points of difference between Colossians and Ephesians, and to this extent, at least, Paul might well be regarded as the actual author of the letter

¹ In chap. iv., *Some Sidelights upon Paul*, *op. cit.*, pp. 60-61.

to the Ephesians. In just the same way, it is distinctly possible that the "Pastoral Epistles" (1 and 2 Timothy and Titus) also originated with Paul, although they differ so greatly in language and style from his other letters. It is even possible that they were written out in their present form after the death of the apostle, for the sort of Church government which is here implied is already very fully developed.

Now that we know with what materials the "books" of the New Testament were originally written, it is also, perhaps, easier for us to understand why there should be textual difficulties in connection with the final portions of some of these writings. It is fairly generally known that the Gospel of Mark really breaks off at the eighth verse of the sixteenth chapter, and that verses 9 to 20 are a later and non-genuine addition.¹ According to a credible tradition, which finds expression in a tenth-century Armenian copy of the Gospels, this appendix was added by the Presbyter Aristion. Aristion is one of the authorities on whom Papias, a second-century author, relies in his exegetical works. He also lived in the second century.

Similar difficulties to those raised by the final verses of Mark's Gospel are provided by the final chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, chapter xvi. There is no reason to deny its Pauline authorship, but there is good reason for the inquiry as to whether it is in its proper place as chapter xvi. of

¹ See Weymouth's and Moffatt's translations of the New Testament.—*Tr.*

the Epistle to the Romans. It is supposed by many that we have in Romans xvi. the remains of a letter to the *Ephesians*, and this theory has been supported in various ways. These are the reasons why doubts are entertained as to the correct position of Romans xvi. At the time when Paul wrote the Epistle to the Romans, he did not know the congregation at Rome personally. Nevertheless, in Romans xvi., Paul sends greetings to a number of people, in such a manner as to give the impression of his knowing those whom he is greeting really well. There are sixteen such greetings to individuals. Again, in Rome one would expect to find mostly Roman names, yet five Latin names only are mentioned. Further, what is said about Aquila and Priscilla raises some difficulty, compared with what we hear about this couple in other portions of the New Testament. There are still more objections, but these are all we can enter into here. Most probably Romans xvi. 3 to 20 does not belong to the Epistle to the Romans at all, this portion being originally addressed to the church at Ephesus.

Finally, I want to refer to the disputes that have taken place in regard to 2 Corinthians, that is regarding chapters x. to xiii. Hausrath was the first to elaborate the theory that the so-called "four-chapter epistle" (*Vierkapitelbrief*) ought not to occupy the place it does. From chapter x. onwards the tone is completely different from that of the preceding chapters. Until chapter x. it is conciliatory, but after chapter ix. there is no lack of strong feeling or vigorous expression. Paul

fears that, when he comes to Corinth, he will be obliged to take strong disciplinary measures against some members of the church. Some contend that 2 Corinthians forms a single unit, but there are others who, on the grounds mentioned, are equally convinced that chapters x. to xiii. are not in their right place.

Now if we realise that a papyrus roll, from its very nature, was most exposed to danger of damage at its beginning and end, then we may be able to account for the fate of the last verses of Mark xvi. The displacement of Romans xvi. is also not so incomprehensible, if we remember that a series of individual documents was sometimes copied on a single roll, or a number of rolls stuck together. Finally, 2 Cor. x. to xiii. was perhaps copied on the same roll as the preceding chapters, but out of order, or placed in the wrong order in pasting three rolls together.¹

¹ If this theory be correct, our 2 Corinthians i.-ix. is really 3 Corinthians, and chapters x. to xiii. are the letter referred to in 2 Corinthians ii., verses 3 and 9.—*Tr.*

VI

DISCOVERIES IN ITALY, GREECE, AND ASIA MINOR —NEW MSS. OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

NOW that we have dealt fairly fully with the bearing on New Testament studies of the excavations in Egypt, it may be of interest to make a brief survey of what has been discovered in some of the other countries on the Mediterranean sea-coast. For here also discoveries have been made, which have, in various ways, thrown light on passages in the New Testament.

The excavations at *Pompeii* have been found not only to be of great importance in enlarging our knowledge of the life of Romans in the provinces during the imperial period generally, but to have given us a most remarkable illustration of Roman civilisation during the apostolic period. We must not forget that it was in the years just before the destruction of *Pompeii* that not only the first three Gospels, but also the letters of Paul, were being written. By the time the eruption took place, all the "books" of the New Testament—with the possible exception of John's Gospel—were already written down. It has been shown that the life of the middle and lower classes in *Pompeii* was very like that of the corresponding classes in the towns of Egypt, Palestine, and Syria.

Researches in the Catacombs of *Rome* have cleared up various points connected with New Testament history. The investigation of the Catacombs is undoubtedly one of the most interesting and important events in recent historical research. Not nearly all the burial-places have as yet been investigated, but one can, at least, obtain some idea of the extent of this field of study, if one realises that the subterranean passages, if placed end to end in a direct line, would stretch for at least 550 miles. Another calculation makes the length of this line almost as great as the distance from northern Italy to the "toe of the boot" in the south. The total number of graves is estimated at about two million. There were, besides the Christian catacombs, those of Jews and pagans. It was at the end of the first century that the Christians obtained their own catacombs. The invasion by Alaric, in 410 A.D., put an end to interment in these burial-places.

De Rossi was foremost among those who, in the nineteenth century, initiated systematic research in this field. The archæologist Boldetti found in the Catacombs of Domitilla a bronze medallion with portraits of Peter and Paul. This medallion dated from the end of the second or beginning of the third century, and so great an authority as Lanciani has encouraged reliance on these constantly recurring portraits.

In the year 1915 there was also found the place where, according to a very ancient tradition, the bodies of Peter and Paul were temporarily reburied, in 258 A.D., when the tombs in the

Vaticanus had become too dangerous as the result of the persecution. Another old tradition maintains that Peter and Paul were imprisoned in the "carcer Mamertinus," where at other times Jugurtha and other famous prisoners were held captive. It is by no means certain that this tradition is correct. But recent investigations have tended more and more to confirm the opinion that the temporary grave of Peter and Paul really has been found. In the same year, 1915, Monseigneur De Waal provided a large sum of money for the expenses of excavations in the Basilica of San Sebastiano on the Appian Way. About six feet below the church of San Sebastiano was found a pagan "columbarium" of the first century A.D., and close beside it an ancient and almost ruined building. While the greater part of the walls had disappeared, a portion was still standing, on which the investigators found "graffiti" of all kinds, dating from the fourth century A.D. A good many of these engraved inscriptions related to Peter and Paul, and from them it appeared that, in the fourth century, this place had been regarded as the grave of both apostles. An authority of the weight of Marucchi expresses his certainty that this is the authentic site of the ancient and renowned grave. Von Harnack, Lietzmann, and many other authorities of similar standing no longer call in question the presence in Rome of either Peter or Paul. In regard to Paul, it was accepted long ago, but recent studies give equal certainty to Peter's sojourn. Research is, in this matter, returning nearer and nearer to the lines of tradition.

It is also of interest to note that the oldest Christian inscription recovered in Rome, from a catacomb that cannot be precisely identified, was written in 72 A.D. From the Catacombs of S. Lucina there came to light one inscription from the first century and two from the second—107 and 110 respectively. Although we hear constant asseverations that Christianity did not come into existence in the first century, but in the second, such assertions, in the face of discoveries like these, hardly make the impression desired.

We know from the Acts of the Apostles that Paul, in the course of his travels, paid a visit to *Athens*, and spoke there on the Areopagus. Every one knows how many antiquities have been discovered in Athens. Those who have visited the British Museum will have seen there the many art treasures from the Acropolis, brought to England early in the nineteenth century by Lord Elgin. Still more such treasures have been preserved in Athens itself. The point of greatest importance for us at the moment is, that the account of Paul's visit to this city conveys the impression, to anyone who knows about Athens in the first century, of having been written by an eye-witness. In and around the temples which could have been seen by Paul when speaking on the Areopagus, were so many statues of divinities, that it is only too comprehensible how his "spirit would be stirred within him" by the sight of all these images "with which the city was filled" (Acts xvii. 16, Weymouth). In Athens at that time were to be found

learned men from all civilised countries, while the population of the city itself was famed for its zest for "novelties." Luke adds to his account of the visit the pointed remark that "all the Athenians and their foreign visitors used to devote their whole leisure to telling or hearing about something new" (Acts xvii. 21, Weymouth). The school of Epicurus carried on its studies in the garden of Epicurus. The Stoics were in the habit of gathering on the Agora, and here in the market-place discussions not infrequently took place between the adherents of various schools. In some way or other Paul got into the company of the Athenian philosophers, but when they found out that he was no "professional" philosopher, they called him a "spermologos," or, as we might say, a picker-up of learning's scattered grains, a sparrow in the aviary, a mere amateur. The philosophers laid hands on him, and took him away with them to the Areopagus, for they wanted to look into this new system taught by the apostle.

The Areopagus was the name of a "judicial council" in Athens, which held its meetings on Mars' Hill, to the west of the Acropolis and in full view of it. Even now one can distinguish the rocky benches on which the members of the council used to sit in the open air. Most probably Paul was taken to this place because it would be easy for him to make himself heard there; it is, however, also possible that it was desired to make some kind of examination into his teaching. However that may be, Paul did speak on the

Areopagus, close to the Parthenon and the Temple of Augustus, and he began with the assurance that the Athenians were people of whom it could be seen that they had a great regard for the unseen world. On his way through the city, Paul had even found "an altar bearing the inscription, '*To an unknown God.*'" Strangely enough, various inscriptions of this kind have come to light, and not only in Athens. Deissmann, in his book on Paul,¹ tells of an altar discovered some time ago at Perganum, with the inscription: "To the unknown gods." Paul went on to quote a hymn by the Stoic Cleanthes, who had taught in Athens at an earlier date. I cannot deal further with his speech here. But it does seem as if the Greeks of Athens failed to understand Paul. To them he was and remained a Jew, a "barbarian."

At the time of Paul's stay in *Corinth*, Gallio was proconsul of Achaia. Some time back an inscription was discovered at Delphi, from which it appears, according to Deissmann, that Gallio's appointment as proconsul was held by him between the summer of 51 A.D. and the summer 52 A.D. From these and other data, it has been possible to conclude that Paul, who had already been working in Corinth for eighteen months before we hear of Gallio, must have arrived in the city early in the year 50 A.D., and left it in the autumn of the year 51. We make the acquaintance of Gallio (who was the elder brother of the philosopher Seneca) in Acts xviii. 12. Gallio was by no

¹ See Bibliography.

means as indifferent as he is often made out to be. As a Roman proconsul he was not in a position to understand the complaint made to him, and the problems that were agitating the turbulent Jews were not the things for which a "noble Roman" would care. So he had the Jews turned out of the court by his lictors.

It was also at Corinth that Paul met with Aquila and Priscilla, that notable husband and wife, Jews from Pontus, tentmakers like himself, who, in the year 50 A.D., had been expelled from Rome in accordance with the edict of the Emperor Claudius against the Jews (Acts xviii. 2). The apostle spoke frequently in the synagogue, "and tried to win over both Jews and Greeks" (Acts xviii. 4, Weymouth). "While the excavators were clearing the street of shops discovered in 1898 on the main road of the city leading to the port, they found a door lintel on which was written in ancient Greek letters "Synagogue of the Hebrews." This is very possibly part of the door of the synagogue in which the apostle used to preach at that time. Perhaps "this block had been moved from its original position, since it would be almost impossible to suppose that a Jewish synagogue had been located in such a magnificent boulevard."¹ Besides, what remains of this door shows no sign of architectural splendour, but is of a simplicity in accordance with what we know of the social position of those to whom Paul originally preached (1 Cor. i. 26-31). The excavations in

¹ Cobern, *op. cit.*, p. 500.

general have shown Corinth to have been an extremely luxurious city, and not lacking in licentiousness. There was a temple to Aphrodite, "where a thousand priestesses are said to have sold themselves in the name of religion. From this it is easily understood why it was in writing to this most licentious city that Paul most emphasised his teaching that a man's body is the temple of the Holy Ghost.¹ It appears rather suggestive that Paul did not venture to preach here until he had received a special revelation from God encouraging him"² (Acts xviii. 9 *et seq.*). Recent investigations have also provided us with sundry items of information about the Isthmian Games, held to the north-east of Corinth. Paul, in 1 Cor. ix., in the 24th and following verses, borrows a number of illustrations from athletic contests, and no doubt what he had in mind were these Isthmian Games.

Acts xix. gives us a circumstantial and lively account of Paul's visit to *Ephesus*. This city was principally famous in ancient days on account of its temple of Artemis, which was accounted among the seven wonders of the world. Of this temple, which lay outside the city, hardly anything remains. Various fragments of pillars are now to be seen in the British Museum, and very important finds of temple inscriptions have been made. The building itself was about 160 feet wide and 340 feet long. The "cella," or "holy of holies," was 70 feet wide and open at the upper end. It is just about here that the statue of Artemis-Diana prob-

¹ 1 Cor. iii. 16; vi. 15 and 16.

² Cobern, *op. cit.*

ably used to stand. Many hundreds of priests appear to have been engaged in the service of the temple, while a number of priestesses were "dedicated to prostitution in the temple service." It is of interest to find among the officials mentioned in the inscriptions the "Town Clerk" and the "Asiarchs." The Town Clerk was a most important personage.

"He was responsible for the form of the decrees which were submitted to the popular assembly, and helped to draft them; he sealed such decrees with the public seal; he often proposed decrees and acted as Chairman at popular meetings, which meetings were commonly held in the theatre; . . . in fact he was so great a man that events are sometimes dated by reference to the year when such and such a town clerk held office."¹

We are familiar with the part played by the Town Clerk in the disturbance related in the nineteenth chapter of Acts. Luke reports him as calling Ephesus, in his speech, the "warden of the temple" of the "statue that fell from heaven." This word is also to be found in various of the inscriptions discovered. It also appears that the shout of the mob: "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians," was a phrase from the liturgy of the Artemis-worship. The theatre into which the Ephesians Gaius and Aristarchus, Paul's companions, were rushed has been excavated; it appears to have accommodated about 2500 people. Further, a great number of larger

¹ Cobern, *op. cit.*, p. 466.

or smaller images of Artemis-Diana have been found. All this material certainly has a valuable bearing on the narrative of events in Acts xix.

In a special study of Luke ¹ I have dealt with various discoveries in Phrygia and elsewhere, but I should like to mention here that recent research has thrown some new light on certain passages in the "Letters to the Churches" at the beginning of Revelation. In Rev. iii. 12 we read: "He who overcomes—I will make him a pillar in the sanctuary of my God, and he shall never go out from it again. And I will write on him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which is to come down out of heaven from my God, and my own new name" (Weymouth). These words were addressed to the church in *Philadelphia*, where, in the year 17 A.D., "A terrific earthquake struck the city . . . and caused multitudes to leave their homes. Tiberius sent help, and a temple was then erected for his worship, and a new name was taken by the city in his honour." Permission to do this was a privilege only granted in special cases by the Emperor himself.

"Yet this new name disappeared from use presently, and about twenty-five years before the Book of Revelation was written the city took another 'new name' in honour of another emperor." ²

¹ *De Evangelisten Marcus en Lucas.*

² Cobern, *op. cit.*, p. 570.

This combination of circumstances explains the meaning of the words in verse 12: "He who overcomes—I will make him a pillar in the sanctuary of my God, and he shall never go out from it again." "And I will write on him . . . my own new name."

In the letter to the angel of the church of *Laodicea*, in Rev. iii., verses 17 to 22, we read: "You say, I am rich . . . therefore I counsel you to buy of Me gold refined in the fire that you may become rich, and white robes to put on . . . and eye-salve to anoint your eyes with, so that you may be able to see" (Weymouth). This church at *Laodicea* was probably founded by Epaphras (Col. i. 7 and iv. 12 and 13). From Col. iv. 16 we know also that Paul wrote an Epistle to this church, which, if there is no connection between this letter and the Epistle to the Ephesians, has been completely lost. From the information we possess, it appears that the city of *Laodicea* must have been very wealthy, and a noted centre of commerce and transport.

"In close connection with the city there was a famous school of medicine, which was especially renowned for its ear ointment and its "Phrygian Powder" to cure weak eyes—the latter being mentioned with respect as early as Aristotle's day."¹

In the light of our knowledge both of the wealth of the city and of the famous eye-salve of the *Laodicean* medical school, the point of

¹ Cobern, *op. cit.*, p. 570.

the expressions in Rev. iii. 14 to 20 becomes clear.

As has already been mentioned, in addition to the various documents of a more private and non-literary character found in the course of the excavations, literary and classical texts were also discovered.

“Of the strictly literary or classical texts, about a thousand have now been published, of which it is estimated that about one-third are Homeric, that rather less than one-third contain texts of the works of other ancient writers already known to us, and that rather more than one-third contain new writings, or writings which, though known by name, were believed to have been hopelessly lost. Among these last we may specially mention . . . a papyrus roll containing several of the orations of Lysias,” a fragment dealing with the history of Greece in the years 396 and 395 B.C., “portions of five of the hundred plays of Menander . . . a sufficient number of fragments of the ‘Hypsipyle’ of Euripides to admit of the reconstruction of the plot, a number of Sappho’s songs,” and a long manuscript of lyrics by Pindarus. Comparison with extant texts has shown that those we already possessed were, in the main, very good, and even sometimes better than those on the papyri of about a thousand years earlier date.

Quite apart from the study of the papyrus texts which we have so far been considering, many

¹ Milligan, *Here and there among the Papyri*, p. 19.

other researches have been made in the last half-century and more, which have produced very important results in New Testament study. I refer particularly to the many discoveries of ancient manuscript versions of the New Testament, but also to those of previously unknown early Christian writings. In this chapter I will confine myself to the Greek, Syriac, Coptic, Latin and other texts of greater or smaller portions of the New Testament.

About seventy years ago Dr Tischendorf discovered, in the St Catherine Monastery at the foot of Mount Sinai, the famous manuscript of the New Testament which goes by the name of the "Codex Sinaiticus." Tischendorf, when he entered the monastery, saw a great basket full of old parchments. The librarian of the monastery told him that already two such heaps of papers, which were in a state of complete dilapidation, had been consigned to the flames. To his no small astonishment, Tischendorf found in this basket one of the most ancient copies of the Greek translation of the Old Testament that he had ever seen. This visit of Tischendorf's took place in 1844, and in 1853 and 1859 he made return visits. It was on his third visit that he was shown a bulky volume in a red cloth. This he found to contain a complete text of the New Testament, with the addition of the Epistle from Barnabas and a portion of the "Shepherd of Hermas." This he managed to take away with him to the then St Petersburg, where he speedily set to work to get it copied. The MS. which

Tischendorf had discovered was almost complete, and dated from the fourth century A.D. Mr and Mrs Kirsopp Lake (then of Leyden, now of Harvard) photographed the whole manuscript in 1908, so that it can now be studied with comparative ease. It may be said, without exaggeration, that the Codex Sinaiticus is one of the greatest treasures of Biblical study in all Europe. It is a curious turn of the wheel of time that this ancient text of the Gospels should have been discovered at the foot of the mountain from which the Law was delivered.

There was another fourth-century Bible extant before the Codex Sinaiticus. This is called the Codex Vaticanus, and is preserved in the library of the Vatican. This codex originally contained the whole Bible, but various portions of the Old and New Testaments are now missing. The MS. was first mentioned in the Catalogue of the Vatican in the year 1481. It was published for the first time, in five volumes, between 1828 and 1838, and later and better editions followed, the first not having been as carefully prepared as it might have been.

The other MSS. that are worthy of mention, side by side with the Codex Sinaiticus and the Codex Vaticanus, are the Codex Alexandrinus and the Codex Bezae. The Codex Alexandrinus contains almost the whole of the Bible, and probably dates from the fifth century A.D. Here and there the MS. is damaged, but by far the greatest part has remained intact, and it has been published by the British Museum. This MS. reached Europe in

the seventeenth century. The Codex Bezae (also called the Codex Cantabrigiensis) is a Greek-Latin manuscript of the New Testament, probably dating from the sixth century A.D. It was presented to the University of Cambridge in 1581, by Calvin's friend and colleague, Theodorus Beza. It never contained the Old Testament. Among its contents are the four Gospels (with certain portions missing) and the Acts of the Apostles. We have already mentioned this Codex in connection with the saying of Jesus about the man working on the Sabbath.¹ The text of Acts has so many "variant readings"—differs so widely from other versions—as to give rise to the suggestion of its being another edition of this book.

Until the end of the nineteenth century these were the oldest and best MSS. of the New Testament available, but since that time further important discoveries of various kinds have been made. Sundry fragments of ancient texts of the New Testament have been found, dating from the fourth and fifth centuries. Professor Gregory, an American who held a Chair at Leipzig (and who, though no longer young, volunteered for active service during the war and lost his life), made a catalogue of these fragments.² In addition to these fourth- and fifth-century manuscripts, papyrus sheets containing portions of the New Testament, and dating from the third and fourth centuries, have been discovered. The

¹ See p. 51.

² In 1909, since when further discoveries have been made.—*Tr.*

most important Greek codex of the New Testament that belongs to these recent discoveries is the so-called Washington Codex. In the year 1906 Mr Ch. L. Freer, of Detroit, Michigan, bought from an Arab at Gizeh, near Cairo, a manuscript, the value of which was at once recognised by the experts. Since it was fairly complete and very ancient, there were good grounds for assigning it a place beside the famous manuscripts already mentioned. At first the date to be ascribed to it was in dispute, but it is now pretty generally agreed that the main part of the text dates from the fourth century A.D. The MS. is written on remarkably good parchment, but even so it has suffered to some extent from the ravages of time. It consists of 374 pages, and once contained the complete text of the four Gospels, in this order: Matthew, John, Luke, Mark. There are now two gaps, between John xiv. 25 and xvi. 7, and from Mark xv. 13, to verse 38, of the same chapter; *i.e.* two whole pages are missing.

We cannot here do more than just mention the discoveries of Latin and Coptic New Testaments, but something must be said about the famous Syriac translation of the New Testament which was also found in the Convent (Monastery) of St Catherine. It was in the year 1892 that two ladies, Agnes Smith Lewis and Margaret Gibson, took a journey to Egypt, in the course of which they obtained from the Greek Archbishop at Cairo permission to visit the Sinaitic library. The librarian received the two ladies in the friend-

liest manner, and in the library they set to work to study the MSS., copying and photographing them. In the very same basket these research workers found a Syriac palimpsest of 358 pages, the leaves of which had become stuck together, and were so old that they almost fell to pieces at the most careful attempts made to separate them. The upper text seemed to be a narrative of the lives of certain female saints. But below this was an ancient Syriac text of the four Gospels. Mrs Lewis and Mrs Gibson photographed the whole work, and then returned to England, where they placed their hundreds of photographs before a number of experts to get their views on the character of their find. No one could make anything of the texts, until Mr F. C. Burkitt showed the photographs to Professor Bensly, who immediately realised that what he had before his eyes was a very ancient and complete Syriac text of the New Testament. It was decided that Prof. Bensly, Mr Burkitt and Prof. J. Rendel Harris should return with Mrs Lewis and Mrs Gibson to Sinai, in order to copy the MS. word for word on the spot. In February 1893, the party arrived at the monastery, where, after forty days' hard work, they succeeded in copying the text, and took their work home with them again.

The great importance of this discovery lay in the fact of its being a very old translation of the New Testament. In all probability the first translation of the New Testament into Syriac was made about the middle of the second century A.D.,

and now there is good ground for believing the text discovered by Mrs Lewis and Mrs Gibson to be a copy of this original Syriac translation of *circa* A.D. 150. We should therefore have before us here, in broad outline, the text in use in the Palestinian Church about A.D. 150. If we call to mind that it was only fifty or sixty years before that date that the Apostle John died, then the importance of this discovery becomes immediately obvious. We must also not forget that what we have here is a translation of the New Testament into an eastern branch of the same language as that spoken by Christ and the Apostles. In this text, for instance, we find a far closer approximation to the Aramaic names than we have in our translations of the original Greek text. Judas Iscariot is called here "Juda Scariota," Peter "Cepha," Aramathea "Ramatha," etc. The most important alteration in nomenclature found in this version is in Pilate's question: "Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barab-bas, or Jesus which is called Christ?" (Matt. xxvii. 17, A.V.).¹ The Syriac translation has here: "Jesus Bar Abba." So that Pilate was asking: "Which Jesus shall I set free? Jesus the son of Abba, or Jesus the king?" While these points illustrate the importance of the discovery, there are, on the other hand, certain other indications that the Syriac reading is a later adaptation of the Greek text, and could

¹ In Moffatt's translation, the question will be found in a form based on the Syriac version. He refers also to other supporting texts, and to the authority of Origen.—*Tr.*

thus hardly be an original text. One thing must, however, be emphasised, and that is, that the discovery by Mrs Lewis and Mrs Gibson has provided us with a further proof of the antiquity and integrity of the original Greek texts.

VII

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITINGS—CONCLUSION

MUCH might be written about the various Early Christian writings recently discovered,¹ but not all of them actually belong to our subject, so we shall have to content ourselves with a brief notice of some of these discoveries.

In 1885, for instance, a large fragment of the Gospel of Peter was discovered at Akhmin, in Egypt, and this find made a great impression, because by this means an apocryphal gospel, which had been known to exist but lost sight of, came to light again after many centuries. This Gospel of Peter must, in any case, have been written before A.D. 190. Some suppose it to be much older, and to have been produced even within the first century. In the same volume in which the Gospel of Peter was written out, there was found also the Apocalypse of Peter. This book was repeatedly mentioned by ancient authors, but until this discovery in 1885 little or nothing was really known about it. The first part of the book is concerned with "last things," the second is about Paradise, and the

¹ For a full account of these discoveries, see Cobern's *The New Archaeological Discoveries, etc.*, Part I.

third about Hell. If we compare the descriptions of future expectations, and of life on the other side of the grave, with those in the Gospels, we notice at once how much more restrained are the canonical Gospels than the Gospel or the Apocalypse of Peter. Generally speaking, the difference between the apocryphal gospels and the Gospels in the New Testament is great and striking. Reading these apocryphal gospels, one finds in them all kinds of miraculous stories, concerning, for instance, the childhood and youth of Jesus, about which we hear nothing in the Gospels sanctioned by the Church. These apocryphal narratives were all written later than our Gospels, and throw no new light on the Jesus of history. In all cases they cover some of the same ground as the familiar Gospels, but add various, and often very fantastic details. From the point of view of the historian, these uncanonical gospels are certainly of great value, but the seeker after the "good news in Christ" can most certainly do without them. The Early Church, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, set aside, with a fine sense of proportion, various early Christian writings, and "held fast" to the four straightforward narratives of the Gospels according to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. As far back as the second century, our four Gospels were regarded as the authoritative recollections of the life of Jesus, no other writings being admitted to the same level of authority, and this position has been maintained up to the present day.

Of recent years discoveries have been made of a number of other early Christian writings, which were known by name, but the contents of which were hardly known at all. For instance, in the year 1889, the famous scholar, J. Rendel Harris of Woodbrooke, found in the Convent of St Catherine a Syriac translation of the long-lost *Apology of Aristides*, which had been known previously only from an Armenian fragment published in 1878. In all probability this defence of the Christian faith was addressed to the Emperor Antoninus Pius, who reigned from A.D. 138 to 161, though there are grounds for the other supposition, that Aristides wrote his *Apology* for presentation to the Emperor Hadrian (117-37 A.D.). Aristides himself was a philosopher from Athens. In this *Apology* he sets out to explain the nature of God and the reason why Christianity must be given a place above the religions not only of the Greeks and the Egyptians but also of the Jews. He gives a detailed description of the Christians' manner of life, and points to their love to one another, "their assurance in prayer and their joy at death." Jesus Christ, crucified and risen again, is their Lord, and the Emperor can "read the authoritative writings and learn for himself concerning the new Way."¹

Of the lost writings of the great theologians of the third century A.D., some, to the great joy of students of the early days of Christianity, have been recovered. Among these are a book by

¹ Cobern, *op. cit.*, p. 245.

Irenæus, one of the Fathers of the Church, *Apostolic Preaching*, and Origen's commentary on Revelation. The first-mentioned book, by Irenæus, was found at Erivan, in an Armenian manuscript. Irenæus was born probably at Smyrna, and was a pupil of Polycarp of Smyrna. He laboured in the South of France, where he was a personal witness of the persecution suffered by the Christian communities in those parts under the Emperor Marcus Aurelius. After his appointment, in 178, as Bishop of Lyons, Irenæus, during the later years of his life, was among those who used their pens in the defence of the Christian position. He wrote a big book, *Against Heresies*, which is extant and was already known to scholars. This other book, *Apostolic Preaching*, is an attempt to show how the apostolic Christianity, which Irenæus himself represented, was the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy.

With this book by Irenæus I have coupled Origen's work on the Book of Revelation. In 1911 a "Privat-Docent" at the University of Athens, named Diobouniotis, sent to Berlin a copy of a short work on the Book of Revelation, found in a convent in Northern Greece. The specialists in Berlin immediately recognised it as the work of Origen, one of the most learned men the Christian Church has ever known. Epiphanius states that Origen's complete works amount to six thousand. Origen was also one of the finest exponents of the New Testament, and it was known that his expository works had

included a commentary on the Revelation of John. This commentary is said to have been his last work, and to be unfinished because of its interruption by the persecutions under the Emperor Decius (about A.D. 249).

Of even greater importance than the finding of these theological works was the discovery of the *Didache* or *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*. Bishop Bryennios, in the year 1875, found at Constantinople a collection of manuscripts, bound together in one volume consisting of 120 pages. This collection of MSS. contained also other writings, but the most important of its contents was the *Didache*. This discovery was published in 1883, and its publication caused a real sensation throughout the world. The date of its writing is estimated to be about 100 A.D., so that this book carries us back almost into the apostolic period. The mere statement of its date conveys at once the idea of its importance. From the *Didache*, the *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, we get an impression of the "doctrine, ritual and polity of the earliest Christian Church."¹ The first five chapters contain moral precepts and warnings, while the remainder deal with Church life, with Baptism, Fasting, the Communion, the duties of the various office-bearers in the Church, etc. The post-communion prayer, in particular, is of a rare beauty.

Another discovery of almost equal importance to the *Didache* is that made by Prof. J. Rendel Harris, of the *Odes and Psalms of Solomon*, and

¹ Cobern, *op. cit.*, pp. 260 f.

published by him in 1909. The *Psalms* which appear in this collection had been heard of previously, as a collection made by the Pharisees about 50 B.C. Of the *Odes*, however, absolutely nothing was known, so that Rendel Harris's discovery attracted a great deal of attention. The first thing that strikes one about them is the similarity between their mystical strain and their wording and those of the Gospel of John. Opinions differ widely as to their probable authorship. Von Harnack "is certain that we possess here a psalm-book of the time of Jesus, which was taken over and edited by the Christian community of Palestine about the year 100." "Dr Harris and other specialists regard the *Odes* as the work of a Jewish Christian of the first century, though some think them to be wholly Jewish, adopted with certain interpolations to form the earliest Christian hymnal." A number of other theories in regard to the *Odes* have also been advanced. "The interest awakened by this unique treasure of early Christian song may be seen from the fact that at least 166 books or important articles concerning this discovery appeared between the years 1909 and 1914. There is marked literary excellence as well as beauty of thought shown in these hymns."¹ They breathe the spirit of the New Testament and of the apostolic period. "There is no direct mention of any incident in Christ's life," "but there are oblique references to the dove of the Baptism," to the yoke of Christ, "to the

¹ Cobern *op. cit.*, pp. 308 f.

rock on which He built the Church." We find in the *Odes of Solomon* direct evidence of the belief in the doctrine of the Trinity, in Christ's Messiahship, in His being the Son of God, and that He was born of the Virgin Mary, crucified and risen again on the third day from the dead.

In addition to the works mentioned, during the same period a number of ancient Christian sermons have been discovered, also ancient prayers and amulets, hymns, and private or official letters, which, in their various ways, often throw new light on the life of the early Christians. Other discoveries have included isolated quotations from the Bible, and liturgical fragments—as, for instance, such a find as that of the Calendar of Church Services in Oxyrhynchus in the years 535 and 536—together with "Acts of Martyrdom," instructions to Church members, dialogues concerning Biblical stories, "ostraca" used as school slates, school-books, documents of ex-communication, epitaphs—in short, any quantity of such documentary evidence as had never before been dreamed of, the study of much of which has deepened and widened our knowledge of the history of the first six centuries of Christianity in a remarkable manner.

We may sum up our survey of the results of recent archæological discoveries in connection with New Testament studies by saying, that their general effect has been to confirm the historical trustworthiness of the New Testament records. Such views as those held by the group of theological writers in Holland which went by

the name of the "Radicalc Hollanders" (and which had their exponents elsewhere), that the whole of the New Testament writings dated from the second century A.D., have now, although the grounds of these assertions seemed at the time when they were first made to be strong, been found to be untenable. Our new knowledge regarding their grammatical characteristics, in itself, almost irresistibly compels us to give the New Testament writings a place in the first century. Dr Milligan, one of the principal linguistic authorities, considers that, in the light of recent discoveries, all these writings (with the possible exception of 2 Peter) may be assigned to the first century. Not only is the antiquity of the New Testament thus confirmed, but the authenticity of its text is now more certain than that of any other book which comes down to us from the distant past. In the middle of the nineteenth century the Biblical scholars had never been able to see a single page of a New Testament manuscript which was older than the reign of Constantine the Great. Many people used to say that older Bibles, if they should ever come to light, would differ very greatly from those in use. The excavations have shown us the New Testaments that were read in the days of the persecutions. And with what result? We have found these manuscripts to be like those already known. There are no really important variant readings: what we learn from them is just the same.

Even a cursory glance at the results of textual

criticism shows how almost unassailable is the textual integrity of the New Testament. We realise this most clearly when we compare the position with that of other ancient authors and their works. For our knowledge of Sophocles, for instance, we depend on a single manuscript, written 1400 years after the death of the author. In the year 1903 Kenyon listed 109 MSS. of Homer, 11 of Plato, and 20 of Demosthenes. Of Virgil's writings, one fairly complete MS. of the fourth century is extant, but the total number of MSS. of Virgil runs into hundreds. Now if we compare the position with that of the New Testament, we find that here the ancient MSS. must be counted by thousands. Von Soden, in 1902, catalogued 2238 New Testament MSS., about 40 of which contained all the books of the New Testament or large portions of them. Some 1716 MSS. contained long extracts from the Gospels, 581 from the Acts of the Apostles, 628 from the Pauline Epistles, and 219 from the Revelation of John. To-day the number of Greek manuscripts of the New Testament is no longer 2328, but 4200, so that one may confidently say that the text of no other ancient book is so plainly authentic.

So we see that the final result of the historical or "higher" criticism has been to confirm, in no small degree, the historical reliability of the New Testament records. True, things have sometimes been said, and opinions put forward, in the name of the "Higher Criticism," which were not only extremely irreverent, but had

precious little to do with exact historical research. But the Higher Criticism itself—the method of historical research applied to the Bible—has certainly produced most valuable results. In the first place it has freed us from the bonds of an untenable tradition, and in the second it has given us a much truer and deeper insight into the real significance of many of the events recorded. Every one who reads his Bible with love and reverence can only hope that the critical study of it will progress still further and penetrate even more deeply into the facts and ideas recorded in it. As time goes on the great importance of this research will be realised more and more clearly by the whole of the Christian community, and its feeling of gratitude to the school of modern study, which has taken the first early steps in this direction, will become continually stronger and deeper.

At the same time it is clearly evident that historical research *as such* can never penetrate into the real heart of the New Testament, for the light of truth shines only upon the life that has been quickened by what the Bible calls “being born again.” In the study of the New Testament, historical research which lacks any living relation to Christ is *a priori* doomed to barrenness. Very many cases could be quoted to show with how great “uncircumcision of spirit” the work of many even of the eminent and otherwise highly intelligent researchers has been done. For one can read the Bible—thinking of the word “Testament” in its other sense,¹ a “Will”—

¹ In Dutch, “Testament” is the ordinary name for a will.—*Tr.*

either as a solicitor or as the heir himself. A Mohammedan and a Christian may tread the Mount of Olives side by side. On the Mohammedan the scene makes no special impression. To the Christian it has that "something more" of which Whittier speaks. It is that "something more," that "better part" which is needed, over and above academic training, in order to interpret the New Testament in all its depth and fullness. Real understanding does not come until one can say, with Tennyson: "I have felt." Luther first realised this, when he said of Erasmus' work as a translator: "*Novum Testamentum transtulit et non sensit.*"¹ That this "something more" has never been lacking to the Higher Critics, nobody would maintain or even assert. It is only necessary to glance through the mass of New Testament research in order to see how, wherever the living relation with the heart of the Bible has been broken, wild theories have been put forward and argument for the sake of argument has run riot. So that the question often arises in one's mind whether any field of historical study exists, in which so many fantastic notions could be served up with impunity as is done in the field of technical New Testament study. Now what is the explanation? If we, as research workers, are undertaking a historical study of such a question as the date at which potatoes became a staple article of diet, we shall get along together without difficulty. Our general philosophy of

¹ Erasmus has translated the New Testament, but he has not felt it.

and reaction towards life does not come into play. In the case of potatoes the power of suggestion is an almost non-existent factor. But when we come to matters of thought and feeling, the situation is very soon changed. As an illustration of this point, just consider the statements of the Roman Catholic and of the Protestant historians regarding Luther's position in relation to the Diet of Worms. Still more strongly, and even to a unique degree, is this true in relation to the New Testament, because what is here central and supreme evokes a spiritual response that lies deeper than the intellect, and is therefore out of reach of what the Bible calls an unregenerate life. Intuition and the patient groping after truth will penetrate many mysteries, but these are not enough to find the heart of Christianity. For from the earnest contemplation of the historical portrait of Christ there springs up, in a way that we can by no means explain, a spark that sets my inner life in flame, and it is in the light that shines from it that I understand for the first time the whole significance and coherence of that picture. Here "flesh and blood reveal" little or nothing "but your Father which is in Heaven." Historical critical research, which approaches and passes judgment upon the central facts of the New Testament intellectually, and apart from this illumination, we reject on principle. There are many who deny the Resurrection of Christ, and, as they say, on grounds taken from the actual reports concerning this event. There are, they

say, too many contradictions in the Resurrection stories ; there is disagreement between the several reports. These people forget that reports which agree in all particulars are looked upon by every historian with far more suspicion than accounts which agree in essentials but differ in minor details. But they also forget something of far greater importance, which is this : the Resurrection of Christ would never gain universal credence, even if every relevant circumstance were attested by affidavit. The deciding factor in the value of research is, in the last resort, the vital principle from which it proceeds. It is high time that this was recognised and realised. For otherwise there will be no end to the confusion, and it is great enough now.

So long as historical research into the New Testament, like every other kind of historical research, is conditioned in its nature and essential character by its object, we may expect from historical criticism, even if pushed to the limits of its possibilities, nothing but illumination and deepening of our knowledge and understanding of the treasures of Scripture. But the vital point, in the case of the New Testament, is to understand what is the object and motive of the research. To anyone who reads the whole body of the New Testament writings and recognises their several testimonies as forming one common witness, this is in no doubt. Anyone who desires to undertake the serious, scholarly study of the New Testament must know Greek, know the Old Testament, know

Judaism, understand the spiritual tendencies in the Imperial period, and be equipped with knowledge of various other kinds; but one thing is above and before all else needful—to know Christ. There and nowhere else lies the centre of gravity. It is a happy thing that the supremely important knowledge is not confined to any school of theological thought. It is a happy thing, too, that it is not the exclusive prerogative of the learned and the intellectually trained. He whose life is “hid with Christ in God” possesses, thereby, the keys to unlock that sanctuary, the New Testament. The Bible is fundamentally the same to the trained professor of Divinity living in Christ and to any simple, pious soul. May it perhaps be true, as was once said by the elder De la Saussaye, that the Bible, in spite of its profundity, is more greatly loved by the “foolish” than by the “wise”? I believe De la Saussaye to be right. The papal infallibility of the theologians is, in the last resort, comparatively harmless. The living fellowship of the Church goes on with its real business.

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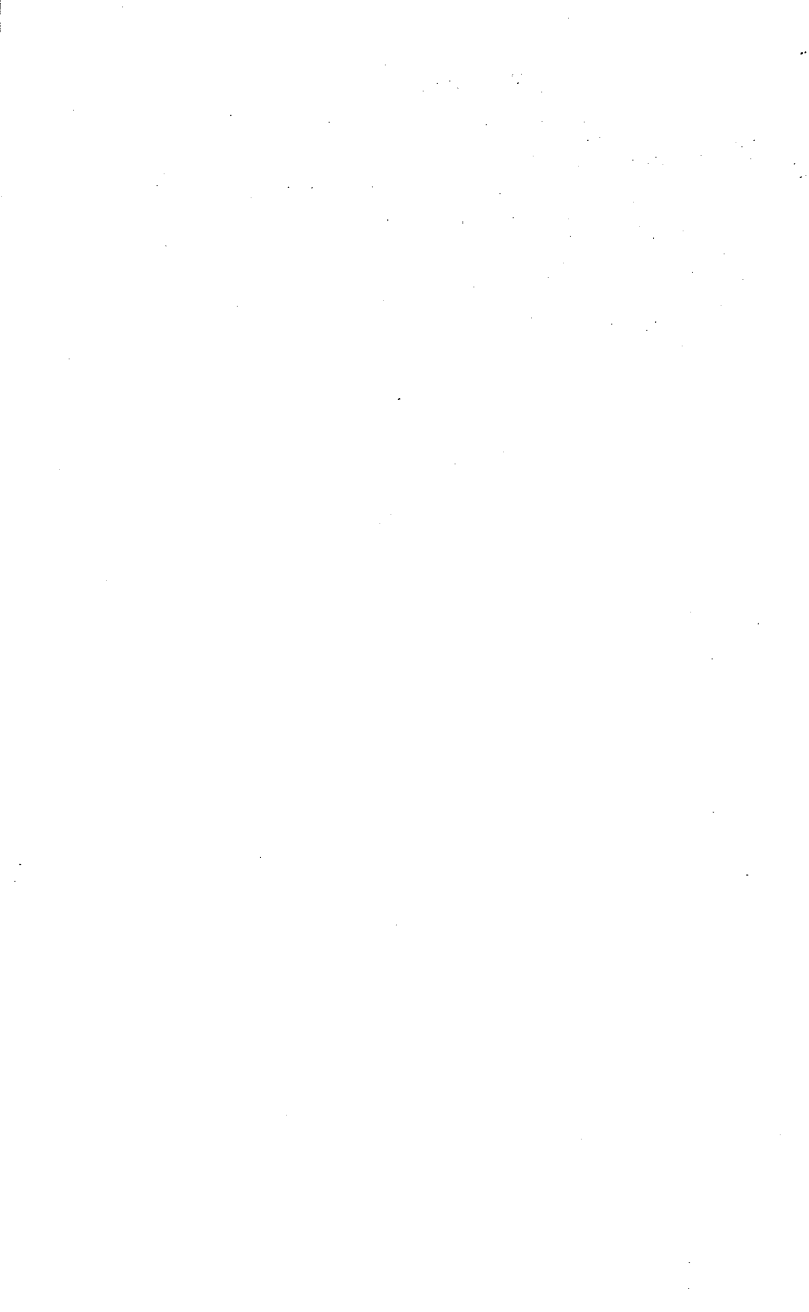
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INDEX OF BIBLE REFERENCES

	PAGE		PAGE
<i>Joshua</i>		<i>Mark</i>	
ii. 15 . . .	16	iv. 22 . . .	60
<i>Ezra</i>		v. 41 . . .	38
iv. 8 <i>et seq.</i> . . .	37	vi. 8 and 9 . . .	97
vii. 12 <i>et seq.</i> . . .	37	vii. 34 . . .	38
<i>Daniel</i>		x. 35 . . .	60
ii. 4 <i>et seq.</i> . . .	37	xii. 17 . . .	77
<i>Matthew</i>		xv. 13 <i>et seq.</i> . . .	132
iii. 9 . . .	39	xv. 34 . . .	38
v. 6 . . .	55	xv. 40 . . .	95
v. 14 . . .	56	xvi. 8 <i>et seq.</i> . . .	114
v. 27 <i>et seq.</i> . . .	49	<i>Luke</i>	
vi. 1 <i>et seq.</i> . . .	94	ii. 1 <i>et seq.</i> . . .	84
vi. 2 . . .	94	iv. 24 . . .	56
vi. 5 . . .	94	vi. 4 <i>et seq.</i> . . .	51
vi. 16 . . .	94	xi. 2 . . .	52
vi. 24 <i>et seq.</i> . . .	95	xii. 2 . . .	60
vi. 26 <i>et seq.</i> . . .	59	xii. 6 . . .	96
vii. 6 . . .	39	xv. 9 . . .	59
x. 26 . . .	60	xvii. 22 . . .	60
x. 28 . . .	50	<i>John</i>	
x. 29 . . .	96	vi. 44 . . .	60
xi. 5 . . .	30	vii. 35 . . .	55
xviii. 20 . . .	56	viii. 57 . . .	89
xx. 20 and 21 . . .	58	xi. 16 . . .	97
xx. 22 . . .	39	xii. 6 . . .	98
xx. 30 . . .	60	xiv. 25 <i>et seq.</i> . . .	132
xxii. 2 <i>et seq.</i> . . .	75	xix. 20 . . .	38
xxvii. 17 . . .	134	xx. 30 . . .	48
xxviii. 20 . . .	56	xxi. 25 . . .	48

	PAGE		PAGE
<i>Acts</i>		<i>I Corinthians—contd.</i>	
ii. 21 . . .	81	vi. 9 and 10 . . .	98, 99
v. 37 . . .	88	vi. 15 and 16 . . .	124
vii. 55 <i>et seq.</i> . . .	80	vi. 20 . . .	99, 101
ix. 14 . . .	81	vii. 10 and 11 . . .	49
ix. 21 . . .	81	vii. 23 . . .	99, 101
xiv. 11 <i>et seq.</i> . . .	80	viii. 5 and 6 . . .	82
xvi. 14 . . .	28	ix. 9 . . .	97
xvii.	120	ix. 24 <i>et seq.</i> . . .	124
xvii. 16 . . .	120	x. 21.	83
xvii. 21 . . .	121	xii. 3.	83
xvii. 22 . . .	98	xvi. 19	28
xviii. 2 . . .	123	xvi. 21	109
xviii. 4 . . .	123	xvi. 22	81
xviii. 9 and 10 . . .	124	<i>2 Corinthians</i>	
xviii. 12 . . .	122	vii. 7	112
xix. 31 . . .	125	viii. 2	30
xix. 35 . . .	125	x.-xiii.	115, 116
xx. 35 . . .	48	xii. 8	81
xxi. 40 . . .	38	<i>Galatians</i>	
xxii. 16 and 17 . . .	81	ii. 4	101
<i>Romans</i>		iii. 24	102
ii.	109	v. 1	101
x. 12.	81	v. 13	101
xiii. 1 <i>et seq.</i> . . .	77	v. 17	101
xvi. 1 <i>et seq.</i> . . .	28	vi. 17	103
xvi. 3 <i>et seq.</i> . . .	115	<i>Ephesians</i>	
xvi. 5	28	i. 16	112
xvi. 22	109	vi. 1	30
xvi. 23	28	vi. 5 <i>et seq.</i> . . .	30
<i>I Corinthians</i>		<i>Philippians</i>	
i. 2	81	ii. 11	83
i. 11	28	ii. 20	112
i. 23	78	iii. 8	103
i. 26 <i>et seq.</i> . . .	123	iv. 22	29
ii. 7	80	<i>Colossians</i>	
iii. 16	124	i. 7	127

INDEX OF BIBLE REFERENCES

157

	PAGE		PAGE
<i>Colossians—contd.</i>		<i>Hebrews</i>	
i. 9 . . .	112	xi. 1 . . .	104
iii. 22 <i>et seq.</i> . . .	30	1 <i>Peter</i>	
iv. 1 . . .	30	ii. 13 <i>et seq.</i> . . .	77
iv. 12 . . .	127	2 <i>Peter</i>	
iv. 15 . . .	28	i. 1 . . .	83
iv. 18 . . .	109	3 <i>John</i>	
1 <i>Thessalonians</i>		13 . . .	111
iv. 13 <i>et seq.</i> . . .	66	<i>Revelation</i>	
iv. 15 . . .	49	i. 10 . . .	84
2 <i>Timothy</i>		iii. 12 . . .	126, 127
iii. 15 . . .	113	iii. 17 and 18 . . .	127
<i>Titus</i>		v. 1 . . .	
ii. 13 . . .	83	xiii. 1 <i>et seq.</i> . . .	77
<i>Philemon</i>		xiii. 18 . . .	91, 92
2 . . .	28	xix. 10 . . .	80
7 . . .	112	xxii. 9 . . .	80

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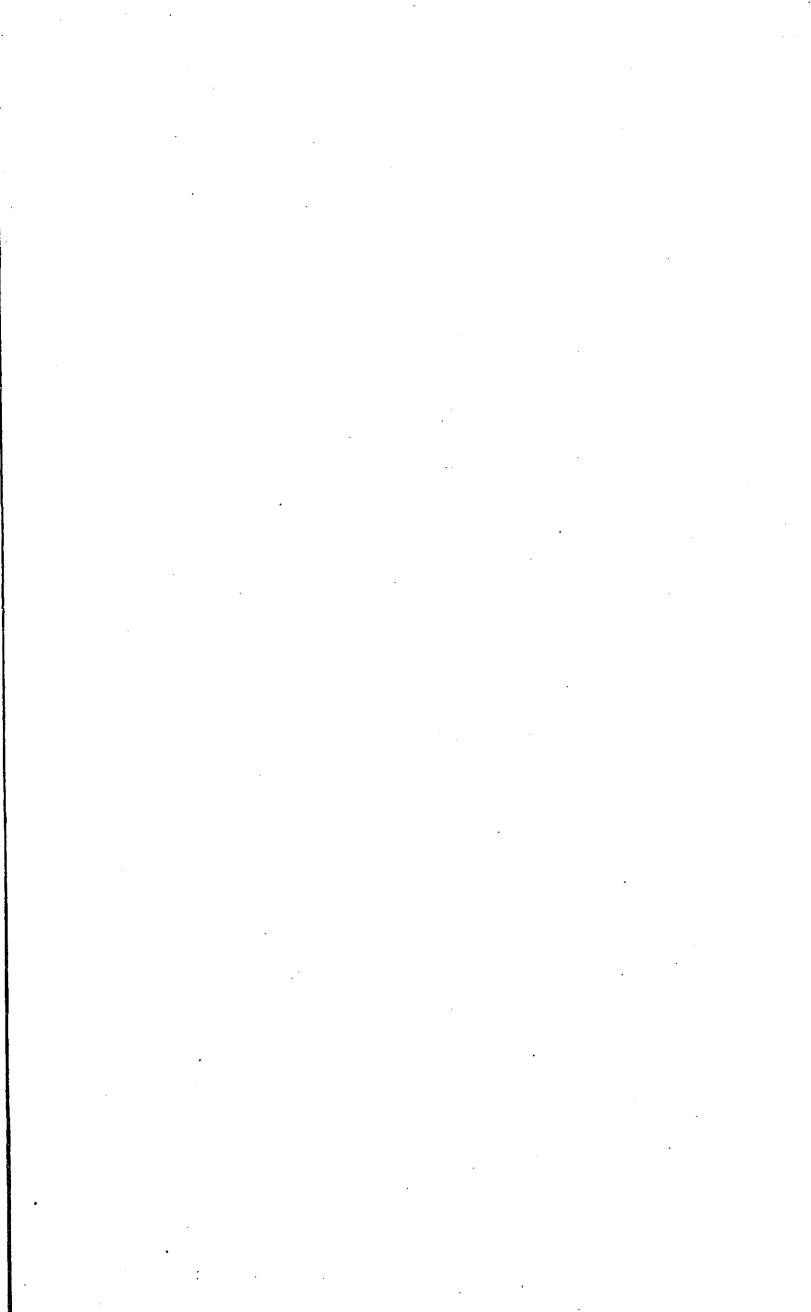
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